Chief Executives Board for Coordination

26 April 2017

Conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its thirty-third session

(Ministry of Agriculture, Budapest, 30 and 31 March 2017)

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Executive summary

The thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was co-hosted in Budapest on 30 and 31 March 2017 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund. The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management, Jan Beagle, of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

The session focused on developing innovative business models as key enablers of the integrated approaches required by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contributing to the review of the United Nations development system being conducted by the Deputy Secretary-General.

Major decisions taken

Following a careful review of the mandates included in the resolution of the General Assembly on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the Committee adopted its strategic plan 2017-2020 and the corresponding results framework, subject to further adjustments, particularly in the light of any additional direction that might be provided by the Secretary-General and the outcome of the review of the United Nations development system.

In 2016, the General Assembly asked CEB to develop a single agreed definition, across the United Nations system, of what constituted fraud, as well as cases of suspected or presumptive fraud. This was considered essential in order to develop effective counter-fraud policies to ensure the compatibility and comparability of related data across entities and to improve overall transparency. In Budapest, the Committee adopted common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud, aligned to the Secretariat's definitions as included in the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework presented by the Secretary-General last year, and which CEB can now endorse.

New technologies open entirely new horizons to reshape the operational models of United Nations organizations. We also believe that adopting internationally recognized standards, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, adds to the transparency and credibility of the United Nations system. Informed by these principles, the Committee adopted a United Nations common documentation standard based on Extensible Markup Language (XML). The common documentation standard represents a strategic achievement. Its adoption will lead to considerable efficiencies in document management processes, and it will preserve the unity of intent across the United Nations system in the critical domain of information and knowledge management. This is an important step towards the digital United Nations system for which the Secretary-General advocates.

Member States are unanimously calling for a higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency in the United Nations system. The operational infrastructure and the business models of organizations are key enablers in the pursuit of the integrated approach for which the 2030 Agenda calls. The choice of Budapest as the venue of the Committee session was made in order to foster a discussion aimed at further developing organizations' collective knowledge and analysis of the United Nations system's experience in global service centres, to start building the basis for a leap forward in this area.

The Committee is now leading the thinking and discussions towards the further consolidation and streamlining of service delivery. Towards this objective, the Committee decided to: (a) consolidate a summary of different approaches and best practices in global service delivery, including governance and risk management options; (b) develop an inventory of needs for operational services and an availability and capacity assessment of potential service providers; (c) conduct a review of cost recovery, cost sharing and pricing models, per service or service line; (d) propose approaches to maintaining and sharing key performance indicators for comparability among organizations and transparency with stakeholders; (e) consolidate a list of service level agreements with internal and external customers, for comparability among organizations; and (f) propose approaches to inter-agency learning and the sharing of best practices between service centres. The Committee also encouraged organizations to take initiatives towards agency-to-agency service provision.

The Committee laid the first brick for the joint provision of selected human resources services by deciding to establish a joint human resources facility for job classification and reference checking — a major bottleneck to speedy and efficient recruitment.

Success in streamlining and integrating business operations is still contingent on strong leadership at all levels, including the Resident Coordinators and the United Nations country team. Together with the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Management has finalized and is now ready to implement (after CEB endorsement) a new system-wide leadership framework, which also aims to enhance leadership accountability for collective results at the country level.

The Committee aims to make clear progress towards achieving diversity, including gender parity, in particular in senior leadership positions. We think increased staff diversity with regard to gender, nationality, age and culture is a matter of equity and also a programmatic enabler. We are therefore ready to help the Secretary-General make his forthcoming gender parity strategy a reality across the entire United Nations system.

The Committee reaffirmed CEB common principle 11: "The organizations of the United Nations system will preserve and foster the health and well-being as well as safety and security of their staff — while remaining committed to stay and respond to the ever-increasing demand for their services, despite the often deteriorating conditions in which those services are being delivered", and adopted a comprehensive programme of work to improve duty of care for United Nations system personnel in high-risk duty stations.

The Committee is designing and putting in place the building blocks necessary to achieve the goal of establishing a "global United Nations system workforce", including mechanisms to support system-wide mobility and the cross-fertilization of skills and to amalgamate specializations, expertise and training opportunities across the entire system. In pursuing this goal, the Committee committed to actively engage in the second phase of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive compensation review — focusing on the conditions for locally recruited staff categories — with the aim of developing adequate, flexible tools that allow organizations to better and more flexibly engage local talent, and to respond in an agile and cost-effective way to their specific challenges in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, the Committee took note of the outcome of the current round of place-to-place cost-of-living surveys and its expected negative impact on a large number of European duty stations. The Committee requested that the implementation of the survey results be carefully planned and prepared, in particular through appropriate communication by ICSC well in advance of an implementation date, and that such implementation should be phased in a gradual manner in order to mitigate negative impacts on staff.

I. Introduction

1. The thirty-third session of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was co-hosted in Budapest on 30 and 31 March 2017 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management, the Deputy Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Jan Beagle.

2. The agenda adopted by the Committee is reflected in the table of contents. The complete list of participants is provided in annex I. The checklist of documents is in annex II. All documents related to the session are available on the website of the CEB (www.unsceb.org/content/march-2017).

3. In her opening remarks, the Committee Vice-Chair informed participants that the Committee Chair, Irina Bokova, would have very much liked to be in Budapest, but there had been an unfortunate coincidence of dates as she had to participate in the ministerial forum of the Group of Seven in Florence, Italy, on 30 and 31 March, which was the first-ever meeting of the Group of Seven dedicated to cultural heritage. That meeting also came as a direct follow-up to the adoption by Security Council on 24 March 2017 of the historic resolution 2347 (2017) on the protection of heritage in situations of conflict. The Chair's participation in the meeting of the Group of Seven in Florence was part of the global movement spearheaded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to bring together partners at the highest levels to harness the potential of heritage as a force for peace, security and reconciliation.

A. High-level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020

4. The approval by the High-level Committee on Management and the subsequent endorsement by CEB at their fall 2016 sessions of the Committee's strategic plan 2017-2020 were made with the provision that both the plan and the attached results framework would be further reviewed for any adjustments in the second quarter of 2017, on the basis of the intergovernmental mandates that would be provided by the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution and of the vision for management reform that might be formulated by the new Secretary-General. The Committee reviewed the strategic plan and results framework for any adjustments.

5. The Committee Secretary summarized the adjustments made to the outcomes, outputs and activities in the results framework since the October 2016 session. Output C.7, "A UN system Gender Parity Strategy is developed and adopted", was added in anticipation of the finalization of the gender parity strategy by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. As the strategy was still being developed, the Committee postponed this discussion until more information on its status and planned next steps became available.

6. Upon suggestion by the Information and Communications Technology Network, activity F.3.b, "Review and propose refinements and enhancements to Topics 1 and 5 of the CEB-endorsed UN System Internal Coordination Plan on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime", had also been added. There was a broad consensus that cybersecurity was a critical topic for the United Nations system, and a number of speakers noted that it was important to integrate physical security and cybersecurity, as doing so would enable the system to learn from lessons from

physical security. In this context, reference was made to the Joint Inspection Unit report on safety and security which made it clear that no organization could address the topic properly alone. Hence, collaboration in this area was critical and the Committee was the right place for it to be taken forward.

7. During the discussion, the implications of new European Union regulations on transparency were brought to the attention of the Committee in reference to priority 5 on data and transparency of the strategic plan. Organizations would need to work collectively, in collaboration with the Legal Network, on ways to address new demands for protection of data and privacy.

8. Based on the shared assessment of its members, the Committee noted that all mandates on operational subjects listed in the new quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution had already been included among the strategic plan's priorities and related activities. The Committee also noted that the strategic plan would have to be adjusted to integrate any action towards the changes in the United Nations development system that would eventually be agreed, following the completion of the review led by the Deputy Secretary-General.

9. The Committee supported the adoption of the strategic plan 2017-2020 with the understanding that it was a living document that would be reviewed continuously to respond to the demands on the Committee, as the system moved forward in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and recognizing that emerging priorities from the Secretary-General in the area of management would need to be given priority attention.

10. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Confirmed its readiness to contribute its input and perspectives in the review of the United Nations development system led by the Deputy Secretary-General, in the forms and modalities that the Deputy Secretary-General would indicate;**

(b) **Following a careful review of the mandates included in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution adopted in late 2016, adopted the High-Level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020 and the corresponding revised results framework, as outlined in document CEB/2016/HLCM/15/Add.1/Rev.1, subject to further adjustments, particularly in the light of any additional direction that might be provided by the Secretary-General, and of the outcome of the review of the United Nations development system;**

(c) **Noted that the strategic plan and the results framework would remain living documents, and that the latter would be populated and adjusted in the course of the next months, following a new round of consultations to be conducted by the CEB Secretariat.**

B. New service delivery approaches: simplification, decentralization and flexibility

1. Thematic discussion on global service centres

11. The Vice-Chair introduced this item by recalling the strong and unanimous call that Member States made at the last Economic and Social Council operational activities segment on 28 February and 1 March for a higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency in the United Nations system. She further noted that this was as true on the operational side as on the programmatic side — the operational infrastructure and the business models of organizations were

key enablers in the pursuit of the integrated approach for which the 2030 Agenda calls.

12. The Vice-Chair noted that, in the past few years, the operational functions of United Nations system organizations had increasingly relied on inter-agency collaboration, replication of best practices and capitalizing on economies of scale. Important achievements had brought measurable results and reductions in transaction costs, but acceleration and mainstreaming was needed.

13. The purpose of this thematic discussion was to further develop organizations' collective knowledge and analysis of the United Nations system's experience in global service centres, to start building the basis for a leap forward in this area.

14. The Committee heard presentations from organizations that have already established global service centres — FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The discussion, which also hosted a presentation by the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit on his report on "The role of service centres in redesigning administrative service delivery", was arranged in a share and compare format, based on a template that covered the following preselected topics: business models and governance; key performance indicators; customer service approaches; operational arrangements; operational challenges and solutions; opportunities and challenges for joint provision of services with or to other United Nations organizations; and possible pricing models applicable for the provision of services to other clients.

Presentation of the Joint Inspection Unit

15. The Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit focused his briefing on the different models for service provision adopted by United Nations system organizations. According to his findings, there were similar characteristics between service centres in that they all provided large-scale operational functions and supported both the headquarters and the field. The report also indicated that the primary driver for establishing service centres has been cost savings, and that these have been realized. However, quality of service and streamlining of processes were also drivers for some organizations, and this has been achieved through business process re-engineering. A key finding was that the establishment of service centres required considerable time, planning, analysis and investment, suggesting that such endeavours should only be undertaken after careful consideration. The next step for the Joint Inspection Unit was to look at inter-agency shared service opportunities, and this work would commence during 2017.

Business models and governance

16. The Committee received presentations from FAO on its centre in Budapest and the Secretariat on its plans for global service delivery. UNCHR acted as a discussant to compare their approach to those of the presenters. FAO presented a model that included significant business process re-engineering that went together with the establishment of the centre. The approach looked at both efficiency gains along with cost savings. The Secretariat presented a case where the introduction of a new enterprise resource planning system was driving change and where there was a push towards drastically reducing the number of entities carrying out back-office functions. The Secretariat was expected to present a detailed proposal to the General Assembly in the fall of 2017. UNHCR, in their role as discussant, in contrast, presented a case where management of operational functions was based in Geneva and existing processes were largely maintained by having Budapest and

Copenhagen as "out-posted" headquarters. The move to Budapest was seen as a cost-saving exercise that did not focus on process re-engineering.

17. From the presentations and the subsequent discussion it was noted that the differences in approaches were larger than some had expected. However, numerous similarities also emerged, in line with the presentation by the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit, showing that the services provided, or planned to be provided, were similar between the organizations, regardless of model. In the case of centres that had been in place for a longer period, such as UNHCR and IOM, Committee members were cautioned against the growth that tended to take place in low-cost locations. Decisions to add units not linked to the original purpose of the centre could lead to business fragmentation at the location of the centre, which might in turn result in less coherence in the organization.

Key performance indicators

18. The Committee received a presentation by UNICEF on their approach to key performance indicators. The day before the meeting, interested Committee members were also invited to a tour of the UNICEF centre in Budapest, where an introduction to their indicators was given. The presentation highlighted a strong focus on establishing clear targets, mostly related to time for completing transactions. The management team reviewed performance against these targets on a weekly basis. It was explained that targets for emergency countries were set more aggressively, in some areas, with shorter time frames than non-emergency countries. Indicators were monitored through daily data collection using a case management tool. Weekly review meetings were held to discuss problem areas identified by the data produced. After analysing causes, corrective action, if necessary, was decided upon. UNDP, acting as the discussant, indicated their use of a similar approach, with a strong focus on regular monitoring of key performance indicators, and with the enterprise resource planning system playing a key role in data collection. In many cases, the indicators were similar or the same.

19. The importance of transparency in key performance indicators and their monitoring was seen as a priority both by the presenters and in the subsequent discussion. It was generally agreed that strong indicators and sound data collection and monitoring systems were essential to provision of services to other organizations. In this respect, the Committee noted that key performance indicators should be shared and published.

Customer service approaches

20. The Committee received a presentation by UNHCR regarding their approach in Budapest and in Copenhagen. The centre in Budapest had been in place for several years already and, when it was established, it was done primarily for cost-saving purposes, with savings primarily being generated by moving to a cheaper duty station. UNHCR had decided on a model where reporting lines still went to operational entities in Geneva rather than to managers at the centre. Hence, the customer service approach continued to lie under the responsibility of each operational division. For UNHCR, improving customer service remained at that moment within the structure of results-based management in the organization, which was different from key performance indicator monitoring for back-office processes. Furthermore, the nature of the approach of out-posted headquarters rather than outsourcing could require a different modality when it came to customer service focus, which in some cases included client satisfaction surveys. UNHCR had just completed a review of its headquarters functions, and adjustments were expected as part of the follow-up.

21. Similarly, IOM, acting as the discussant, noted that recently established centres were considerably different from older ones. When IOM established its centres in Manila and Panama, customer service approaches and detailed key performance indicator development and monitoring were not prioritized, as cost savings was the immediate driver. Hence, this had not been a regular focus of the management of the centres. In the discussion that followed, the Committee agreed with the presenter and discussant that a strong customer service approach along with strong key performance indicators and data collection were a precondition for successful service provision to others. Approaches to customer service could also include surveys and the involvement of service recipients in governance mechanisms to ensure transparency and satisfaction with management. However, no clear consensus emerged on whether inclusion in the governance structure would be necessary for good customer service.

Operational arrangements

22. The Committee received a presentation by UNDP which focused primarily on cost recovery and pricing models. UNDP outlined four possible methods of pricing for services: fee and payment against invoices; transactions charged and reported back through an inter-funding accounting system; subscription fees against a centre of excellence; and joint investment and subsequent subscription. All of these approaches were presented as possible ways to manage the financing of service provision to others. The preferred model for potentially extending services to others was not indicated, but mention was made of the existing global price list, which was used in the field for ad hoc service provision. WHO, in its role as discussant, stated that their model was 100 per cent funded from the core budget of the organization and did not operate on a cost-recovery basis. In relation to providing services to UNAIDS, an additional model was introduced, that of cost sharing based on the number of staff. The latter represented an unsophisticated, yet very simple, approach to cost sharing.

23. In the subsequent discussion, a fifth financing model was proposed, which would be based on increasing the capacity of a centre to handle new transactions based on estimated volume. The organization to receive services would then pay for the expansion and continued management and cost of this increase in capacity.

24. Finally, the Committee received briefings from UNAIDS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as organizations that were receiving services, and from UNFPA and UNESCO as organizations looking for further options for additional/increased outsourcing of back-office functions. These organizations were looking for optimized programme delivery with high-quality services that were cost-effective. The importance of modern enterprise resource planning systems and their ability to communicate with each other, while not necessarily being interoperable, was seen as a key precondition for such collaboration. It was noted that existing, organization-specific service centres had been designed to specifically meet the needs of the parent organization in the first instance, with excess capacity being offered to sister organizations. This relationship and construct differed from the model of a service centre designed to meet the needs of a number of organizations equally. A clearly defined client's role and influence in the governance as a fully fledged partner to the service provider was consequently raised as a key issue. The presenters agreed that good communication between provider and recipient of services was critical, and that there needed to be a clear and effective dispute resolution mechanism. A common perception was that of service providers prioritizing services for their organization, and therefore tracking of key performance indicators was needed to ensure

transparency. In the subsequent discussion it was agreed that a clear definition of roles and responsibilities of both the service provider and the client was important in order to also be able to accurately assess the causes of inefficiencies and delays, when they arose.

25. In the general discussion on how to move forward, the Committee agreed that organizations should be asked to develop and make accessible to other United Nations entities a list of the services that they could provide for others, the key performance indicators that they used and their preferred cost recovery/pricing model. Organizations looking to outsource services would then have a clear picture of existing possibilities and the approaches used by the different existing centres. Such a list could also form the basis of system-wide and bilateral discussions on moving towards joint service provision.

26. Throughout the presentations and discussion, some challenges emerged. There was a consensus that change management and communication of change must be carefully planned and implemented. Working through global service centres was different from business as usual, and investment in sustained change management was crucial for success. There was a need for culture change along with process change. It was also noted that process and culture change within organizations had successfully led to large efficiency gains even without moving to a service centre approach.

27. It was agreed that, moving forward, predictable, transparent and disaggregated pricing models or alternative approaches to compare costs of services provided would have to be determined. There was also a general consensus on the fact that key performance indicator monitoring and customer service approaches might, in some cases, need to be improved and, in these cases, focus needed to be on adopting a model for external service provision in addition to one for internal support only.

28. Many noted that finding and retaining staff represented a challenge, in different degrees, depending on the duty station. Recruiting staff that were familiar with how United Nations system organizations operated was often difficult. Some organizations also mentioned the possible need for more flexible contract modalities for service centres. In this respect, it was agreed that the upcoming review of national staff contracts by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) might be useful.

29. On the "softer" side of challenges, the importance of making staff feel a part of a whole was emphasized. In that context, developing a shared ownership of the organizational mandates was difficult when work was carried out in different locations. Similarly, some service centres did not allow for the "coffee break" approach to solving problems, where issues could be addressed informally and where ownership was created from personal relationships. In one case, creating a conference centre as a part of the service centre was a way to bring staff from the organization as a whole into contact with service centre staff.

30. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Expressed appreciation to the Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit and to member organizations for their presentations;**

(b) **Requested the CEB secretariat to form a task force to:**

(i) **Take stock of the information and the data gathered to date on the experiences of member organizations with respect to the evolution of their service delivery models;**

(ii) **Consolidate a summary of different approaches and best practices in global service delivery, including governance and risk-management**

options, building on existing Committee documents and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on global service centres;

(iii) Develop an inventory of needs for operational services and an availability and capacity assessment of potential service providers;

(iv) Conduct a review of cost recovery, cost sharing and pricing models, per service or service line;

(v) Propose approaches to maintaining and sharing key performance indicators for comparability among organizations and transparency with stakeholders;

(vi) Consolidate a list of service level agreements with internal and external customers, for comparability among organizations;

(vii) Propose approaches to inter-agency learning and sharing of best practices between service centres;

(viii) Prepare a paper for the second quarter 2018 session on the above;

(c) Requested the Finance and Budget Network to develop proposals for United Nations standards for inter-agency funding and drawdown, with the aim to provide a clearing mechanism for services provided across entities;

(d) Encouraged organizations to take initiatives towards agency-to-agency service provision.

2. Project proposal for the joint provision of human resources services

31. The Vice-Chair recalled that the Human Resources Network had briefed the Committee about an initiative to establish a joint human resources facility for job classification and reference checking. This initiative formed part of the new strategic plan.

32. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network introduced the topic, reporting back on discussions at the recent Network meeting. A number of agencies were looking into joint service delivery for one or both of the suggested services, while others pointed out that the desired qualitative benefits would best be achieved by better process integration into other human resources processes within the organizations. There was overwhelming support for better information-sharing among agencies. The Network agreed that a joint facility should be driven by interested organizations in a non-prescriptive manner, while more generally fostering collaborations among all Network members in these areas, regardless of the use of a joint service delivery facility.

33. The external consultant contracted by the Human Resources Network subsequently presented her business case and feasibility study for the project. She highlighted that — from a financial perspective alone — only the collaboration in job classification would yield savings for a number of agencies. No such savings were to be expected in reference checking. However, a number of qualitative benefits and more thorough risk management would represent a positive impact of the initiative. She confirmed that a joint facility should be able to offer job classification services at a lower or same cost as that currently offered by specialized consultants. Most organizations were interested in further collaboration in process streamlining and better information-sharing, regardless of their immediate interest in joint service delivery. She analysed several options, ranging from a purely virtual centre to the creation of a new centre independent of current locations. Furthermore, she recommended specific governance arrangements, with the involvement of participating organizations and the CEB/High-level Committee on Management.

34. In the subsequent discussion, the representative of the Legal Network explained that joint information-sharing on disciplinary cases was feasible, as long as it contained only confirmed findings or credible allegations. Further work was needed in this regard. A number of organizations indicated a preference for a physical centre in a location and setting that made use of existing structures and facilities. UNHCR declared their interest to join a joint facility for reference checking, but they were still undecided about job classification. The World Tourism Organization indicated that for small agencies a fee-per-use modality was critical in any decision to join. UNFPA, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and WHO also indicated a firm interest in joining such a facility for both services. UNDP confirmed the willingness of United Nations Volunteers to host such an initiative, indicating that they saw large potential in it. IOM indicated their interest in further collaboration, highlighting, however, that cost was a critical decision criterion.

35. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Took note, with appreciation, of the business case and feasibility study submitted by the Human Resources Network (CEB/2017/HLCM/4). The Committee noted that the predominant drivers for the initiative were qualitative improvements and risk reduction, while a clear financial business case could only be demonstrated for job classification services. The Committee also highlighted that a number of qualitative benefits could be attained through other initiatives such as process streamlining and enhanced information-sharing, and encouraged the Network to pursue these initiatives;**

(b) **Endorsed the recommendations to proceed with the joint facility project, indicating its preference to start with the second option — to co-locate the joint facility with existing activities, as presented in the document. The Committee endorsed the other recommendations contained in the report, in particular with regard to an inclusive project governance;**

(c) **Noted that, to date, only one agency had indicated their interest in hosting such an initiative (UNDP/United Nations Volunteers), and requested interested agencies, including UNDP, to form a working group to prepare concrete steps towards implementation, including location selection, staffing modalities and a detailed pricing model;**

(d) **Requested this working group to inform the Committee, through the Human Resources Network, about a detailed implementation plan and provide regular progress updates on this Committee initiative;**

(e) **Requested the Human Resources Network to initiate preparatory work for the establishment of a reference checking database, and to report back on its progress at the next Committee meeting.**

C. Global United Nations system workforce and transformative leadership

1. Duty of care in high-risk environments: terms of reference and programme of work

36. The Vice-Chair introduced this item stressing that, today more than ever, duty of care for United Nations personnel, particularly but not exclusively in high-risk duty stations, represented a subject that so many organizations were looking at as a key issue. It was part of the new strategic plan, and the activities provided for in the new results framework had been taken forward by a task force under the leadership

of the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. The Vice-Chair expressed appreciation to UNHCR and to UNICEF, who was providing secretariat support for the task force.

37. The Chair of the duty of care task force acknowledged the work of Under-Secretary-General Peter Drennan in completion of the original working group's mandate. She presented both a summary of works already under way and the task force's proposed approach, which was summarized as mapping (now complete), planning (currently under way) and implementing (the final phase).

38. The task force comprised broad representation of organizations and inter-agency networks.

39. The mapping of activity had demonstrated that both organizations and networks were actively working on all but two of the priorities identified by the original working group.

40. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security expressed appreciation for the establishment of the task force and for the progress made. He highlighted some of the key issues related to duty of care in various duty stations around the world, particularly those that were very high risk, and noted that the deteriorating conditions for United Nations staff reinforced the absolute relevance of this work, and the need for progress.

41. Members of the Committee expressed strong support for the approach. Two potential areas for further consideration included eventually broadening the focus from high-risk duty stations, and the need to explicitly implement measures for the non-staff workforce. Some members also proposed to further develop this stream of work in order to integrate it into the new CEB collaborative leadership model, as well as into considerations on duty of care for partners, particularly with respect to potential insurance arrangements for malicious acts and other types of coverage, where the United Nations system certainly had the scale to obtain particularly advantageous conditions.

42. The Chair advised that there would be a face-to-face meeting of the task force in Geneva in May, and requested that organizations ensure that they were represented by appropriately senior personnel who had decision-making authority.

43. The Vice-Chair highlighted the importance of the initiative, and the expectation that not only individual agencies but also the relevant inter-agency groups (the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, the Human Resources Network, medical doctors, etc.) would continue to support this initiative.

44. **The High-level Committee on Management took note with appreciation of the progress report by the task force, endorsed the programme of work contained therein and approved the terms of reference of the task force.**

2. Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the current security environment for United Nations personnel

45. The Vice-Chair recalled that one of the six top priorities of the new strategic plan was to foster organizations' commitment to the safety, security, health and well-being of their staff. She also noted that CEB had strongly reaffirmed this notion in its common principle 11: "The organizations of the United Nations System will preserve and foster the health and well-being as well as safety and security of their staff — while remaining committed to stay and respond to the ever-increasing demand for their services, despite the often deteriorating conditions in which those services are being delivered."

46. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security then briefed the Committee on the current security environment for United Nations personnel, noting that the United Nations was operating in a global security environment that was increasingly dangerous, complex and challenging. At the call of their respective governing bodies, United Nations personnel were delivering United Nations political, humanitarian, peacekeeping and development mandates and programmes in the most challenging parts of the world.

47. A growingly complex combination of threats also presented an increasing pressure on the security capacities of host governments, which, inevitably, transferred greater responsibility to the United Nations. The intensity of the attacks against United Nations premises and official vehicles had increased threefold from 2014 to 2015, and there had been a twofold increase in direct attacks against United Nations peacekeepers serving in high-risk environments. Among the worrying trends were the partnership and intersection between non-state armed groups, violent extremists and criminal groups, the use of Internet and social media in fuelling violence and expanded armed confrontations in high-density urban areas. In emerging conflict zones, the predominance of terrorist attacks using unsophisticated modus operandi was likely to continue, while in complex conflict theatres the innovative use of weapons and sophisticated tactics was expected. Targeting might include United Nations and humanitarian operations and personnel, either deliberately or opportunistically.

48. Regrettably, the security environment was unlikely to improve in the near term. An assessment of the global security environment for the next five years had concluded that armed conflict and violent extremism would continue to shape the future global security landscape.

49. The Under-Secretary-General noted the need to improve the ability of organizations to prepare staff working in high-risk operations, and to foster their resilience after working in those environments. In this respect, the Committee's work on duty of care was critical. He further noted that, when organizations scaled back and moved out international staff, they left national staff behind and relied on them to deliver. Inter-Agency Security Management Network working groups on security arrangements for national staff were acting to help staff and provide them with better tools to support their resilience.

50. The Under-Secretary-General underlined that appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place, and costs associated with them should be explicitly recognized. In this respect, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the Finance and Budget Network were working to review different funding models to identify ways forward, including by looking at ways to use technology to alleviate gaps in funding.

51. Noting that the United Nations risk profile had increased dramatically, the Under-Secretary-General stated that United Nations organizations should work towards more refined and consistent management policies and tools in order to be able to assess, context by context, what their tolerance to risk should be, and how to manage it.

52. Finally, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the United Nations system was losing as many people in traffic accidents each year as in terrorist attacks. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network was looking at developing a road safety strategy to prevent deaths.

53. In the ensuing discussion, Committee members noted the direct link between cyberterrorism and business continuity. In this respect, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Assistant Secretary-General for Information and Communications

Technology was taking the lead on this subject at the Secretariat, and the Department of Safety and Security was working closely with that Office.

54. The representative from the United Nations Medical Directors Working Group noted that prolonged exposure to high-risk environments had a heavy health and psychological impact, and that there was a deep gap existing between medical risk management and security risk management. She stressed the need for organizations to dedicate the necessary attention to this matter, and to comply with existing health support policies and provisions.

55. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) Took note with appreciation of the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, and reiterated that safety and security and wellness were key components of sustainable business models, as well as collaborative approaches, compliance with regulatory and policy provisions and a culture change that recognized and integrated all such elements;

(b) Took note of the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network at its twenty-fifth session.

3. United Nations system leadership model

56. The Vice-Chair recalled that the common principles to guide the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, endorsed by CEB in April 2016, highlighted the critical importance of transformative leadership across the United Nations system, and that CEB had tasked its high-level committees to develop a shared concept of transformative and collaborative leadership to effectively support the 2030 Agenda. The Deputy Director of the United Nations System Staff College, acting as the lead of the joint High-level Committee on Programmes/High-level Committee on Management task team on leadership, and the co-chairs of the United Nations Development Group working group on leadership, subsequently facilitated a consultative process that brought together a range of complementary expertise and perspectives from across the system. The combined effort culminated in the comprehensive draft United Nations system leadership framework that was before the High-level Committee on Management for its consideration (in parallel with the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group).

57. The draft framework identified eight defining characteristics of United Nations leadership aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; namely, that it was norm-based, principled, inclusive, accountable, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative and self-applied. Systems-thinking, co-creation, focusing on producing impact for the most vulnerable and driving transformational change were four key leadership behaviours that exemplified the new way of working. The framework was intended to be applicable to staff at all levels, functions and duty stations, and to serve as a strategic organizational tool. It complemented the Secretary-General's initiatives promoting cross-pillar collaboration and gender parity.

58. The co-leads stressed that culture change would be central to operationalizing the framework. An "opt-in" approach would be taken, permitting agencies to determine how to internalize it as appropriate to their unique needs. The key drivers of the required change were ownership by senior United Nations leaders; active engagement and involvement by all staff; and aligning structures, systems, policies and processes to the framework to enable the desired behaviours. To promote implementation through "pull factors" (rather than imposing desired behaviours on staff), it was proposed that change agents should be empowered within

organizations to bring the framework to life. It was envisioned that their achievements could be publicly recognized through an online platform to create transparency, reinforce accountability and create incentives for change. The proposal also enumerated a number of potential system-wide interventions to stimulate the alignment of United Nations culture to the framework, which would complement entity-specific road maps.

59. Recognizing that good leadership was hard to define yet central to an organization's performance, the High-level Committee on Management fully supported the leadership characteristics and behaviours articulated in the framework, noting its utility as a tool to promote cultural and organizational change at all staff levels. The Human Resources Network had discussed the framework and its implementation in detail and welcomed it as a helpful guiding framework. While acknowledging the diversity within the United Nations system, members underscored the importance of and value in having a shared vision and common framework towards which to collectively strive. While it was understood that all staff had a role to play in realizing the desired changes, the importance of support for the framework from executive heads and other senior managers was emphasized.

60. Many members looked forward to beginning to operationalize the framework within their organizations and pursuing the accompanying culture change. The bottom-up approach to pulling culture change through entities was welcomed. The Committee also appreciated that the implementation of the framework would be flexible and respect the diversity of United Nations system organizations and their specific needs, while still guiding the entities to harmonize around core values. Organizations choosing to opt in would develop detailed and systematic internal implementation road maps based on their individual business models and in the context of their broader organizational approaches to culture change. Some members expressed interest in having a more fully developed global road map for their reference.

61. A number of members indicated that the proposed leadership framework was well aligned with their existing leadership and/or change strategies and activities. Sharing experiences and best practice among participating entities would be beneficial in order to support effective operationalization and promote coherence. Support was also expressed for proceeding, also on an opt-in basis, with the collaborative system-wide initiatives proposed. Additional opportunities for inter-agency collaboration in leadership development could be identified as implementation progressed.

62. It was suggested that gender sensitivity should also comprise a competency for leaders. Another essential leadership characteristic — the capacity to build trust — was highlighted. Indeed, the leadership framework was seen to be a useful lever for bridging divides and restoring credibility in the context of present challenges. It was observed that leadership also required taking calculated risks, another area in which culture change was required within the United Nations system. Current realities required bold action and ambition, and thus it was suggested that "driving transformational change" could be featured more prominently in the framework. It was also suggested to further emphasize in the framework equality and justice as key causes that the United Nations system served.

63. Accountability to the framework was stressed, and members agreed that appropriate performance assessment and management would be critical to ensure that United Nations system staff were working to embody the framework. More thought was needed on ways to incentivize and reward leadership in order to drive the implementation of the framework. Investing in staff training was seen to be essential to meeting the framework's aspirations.

64. **The High-level Committee on Management supported the adoption of the United Nations system leadership framework, with adjustments resulting from the discussion, for submission to CEB at its April 2017 session.**

4. Outcome of the eighty-fourth session of the International Civil Service Commission and the Human Resources Network strategic workplan

65. The Vice-Chair recalled that, following the implementation of a revised compensation package for internationally recruited staff, the ICSC comprehensive compensation review entered into a second phase, reviewing the conditions for locally recruited staff categories. In order to approach this task holistically, ICSC decided that, before entering into the concrete compensation discussions, a review of the current use of staff categories and the use of the current contractual framework might be useful. The Vice-Chair confirmed that organizations were very much concurring with this approach, since the discussions on readiness to implement the new Sustainable Development Agenda were clearly pointing towards the need for a high-quality, agile workforce that was able to deliver results in an increasingly resource-constrained and less predictable environment, while national and local labour markets were increasingly well developed. Emphasis on national implementation and partnerships was growing, and the discussion was a pertinent one in this context.

66. The Vice-Chair also highlighted that ICSC was currently discussing the outcome and implementation of the recent place-to-place surveys which, while resulting in some increases for mainly the American and Canadian duty stations, were affecting many European headquarter duty stations negatively through significant reductions of net take-home pay. She highlighted that this required careful communication and preparation.

67. Other important topics discussed at the eighty-fourth session of ICSC included the planned review of the pensionable remuneration scales, and a planned review of the hardship classification methodology. The latter was of particular interest and importance to the field-based organizations, given that thorough and realistic duty station classifications were an important underpinning of the compensation system for mobile staff.

68. The Vice-Chair of ICSC confirmed the progress of the discussions on the future use of staff categories, and of the National Professional Officer category in particular, noting that the organizations' call for more flexibility — in particular with regard to the nationality requirement in recruitment and the restrictions to national content of work — were noted and addressed in these discussions.

69. The Vice-Chair of ICSC also provided additional background information on the place-to-place surveys, highlighting that the use for the first time of external data provided by Eurostat had led to some additional comparability challenges in duty stations based in the European Union. Those would be addressed through additional surveys in the coming months. With regard to the results for Geneva, which was likely to result in a reduction in net take-home pay of 6.3 per cent, based on data collected as of the end of March, the Vice-Chair highlighted that the main driving factors were macroeconomic conditions, given that the cost of living had increased in recent years in New York but had decreased in Geneva. In addition, currency exchange rates played a role. He highlighted that the current methodology did not provide for a salary guarantee at the current local level but only for equal purchasing power compared with New York. ICSC had decided to postpone the implementation in Geneva by one month, with subsequent implementation based on the current operational rules for implementation.

70. With regard to the hardship classification review, the ICSC Vice-Chair confirmed that the present review would be handled in a comprehensive manner, taking into account factors such as geographic isolation, health care and suitability for family life, while not discounting safety and security aspects.

71. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network confirmed the active involvement of the Network in the ICSC deliberations, highlighting the importance of the hardship classification review as an important underpinning for a mobile workforce. She also stressed the importance of a timely conclusion to the ongoing discussions on the use of staff categories, pointing to the need for more flexibility in using the National Professional Officer category. With regard to the results of the place-to-place surveys, she confirmed that organizations at the ICSC session did not concur with the immediate implementation of the survey results in Geneva, given that more detailed information and communication was needed for staff, that implementation would have to be carefully planned and prepared and that adequate transition and phase-out measures would need to be put in place. Such transition measures should not only be applied in Geneva but in all future duty stations that saw a negative impact following such surveys. She informed the Committee regarding a letter that was addressed to the ICSC Chair by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva on behalf of the Geneva-based organizations, highlighting these points.

72. In the subsequent discussion, a number of organizations raised concerns about the currently planned approach to implementing survey results in Geneva, reiterating the request for more detailed information and explanation, as well as for a carefully planned implementation with adequate transition measures to mitigate impact on existing staff. Geneva-based organizations confirmed their support for the letter issued by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. They voiced serious concerns about the impact on staff morale, in particular given the concurrent implementation of the changes of the compensation review. Some organizations voiced serious concerns regarding the aggravation of the already existing overlap between General Service and Professional salary scales in Geneva. The representative of UNHCR confirmed the continued need for ICSC to address the particular situation in Budapest with regard to post adjustment.

73. Considering the concerns raised by staff and organizations, the representative of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations strongly recommended postponing implementation in order to carefully plan the implementation and to prepare adequate transitional measures, not least to minimize the number of staff seeking legal recourse. He supported the additional survey in order to address the challenges of the first-time use of external data in European Union-based duty stations.

74. On other ICSC-related topics, participants unanimously welcomed the planned review of the hardship classification methodology. They also appreciated progress on the deliberations on the future use of staff categories, including the National Professional Officer category, highlighting that it would be useful if this discussion could lead to adequate conclusions and recommendations in the coming months.

75. The ICSC Vice-Chair confirmed that ICSC would take the concerns of organizations and staff seriously, and that ICSC concurred with the need for adequate, detailed and timely communication to organizations and staff. He also confirmed the willingness of ICSC to be actively engaged in the communication of results.

76. Following this discussion, the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management recalled that the Human Resources Network had presented a discussion paper on the evolution of the global United Nations system-wide

workforce a year ago. Based on this discussion, the Network was requested to continue its discussions and revert to the Committee with a high-level workplan.

77. The Co-Chair of the Human Resources Network introduced the workplan, highlighting that it had been developed in consideration of the recent quadrennial comprehensive polity review resolution, the management reform agenda of the new Secretary-General and the new strategic plan of the Committee. She highlighted the four priority areas of the workplan: (a) creating an enabling work environment; (b) enhancing United Nations system permeability, inter-agency mobility and cost efficiency; (c) fostering human resources analytics, evidence-based decision-making and the information technology enablement of human resources' and (d) transforming the way in which human resources was managed, in individual organizations and system-wide.

78. The creation of an enabling work environment would include aspects such as duty of care, other psychosocial support, a structured way of measuring and addressing staff engagement and diversity considerations. The Network saw gender parity as an important element, and advocated for its consideration as part of a broader diversity agenda that might help to create enabling work environments. While inter-agency mobility still needed further attention, it could be expected that career paths of the future would include more moves in and out of the United Nations system, and this would need to be considered in the review of contractual arrangements, benefits and policies. The Co-Chair also recalled the Secretary-General's request for further simplification and decentralization.

79. Furthermore, the Co-Chair underscored the increased need to underpin human resources-related decisions with fact-based analysis and cost predictions, thus calling for an approach that rationalized and streamlined routine inter-agency data collection efforts in order to free resources for better analysis of the collected information. Finally, the way in which the human resources function should operate would also have repercussions to the way in which the Human Resources Network operated. It was suggested that inter-agency human resources expert communities be created as a forum for intensified knowledge exchange and a driver for more tangible joint human resources initiatives, supported by a knowledge-sharing platform. Apart from the existing community on performance management, staff engagement and culture, the most interest was expressed in communities for talent outreach and recruitment as well as for human resources analytics and workforce planning.

80. In the subsequent discussion, organizations confirmed their support for the Human Resources Network workplan. One organization highlighted the importance of diversity management in a broad sense, including employment of people with disabilities and a balanced, intergenerational workforce.

81. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Confirmed its continued willingness to actively participate in the discussions of the second phase of the ICSC compensation review in the same consultative manner used in the first phase, in particular through the engagement of its strategic group;**

(b) **Confirmed its expectation that the outcome of this review should lead to adequate, flexible tools that allow organizations to respond in an agile and cost-effective way to their specific challenges in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;**

(c) **Highlighted the need to better and more flexibly engage local talent, and expressed its expectation that this part of the review be concluded in the short term;**

(d) **Welcomed a comprehensive review of the hardship classification methodology, noting that this was an important underpinning for organizations' endeavours to foster geographic mobility of staff;**

(e) **Took note of the outcome of the current round of place-to-place surveys and its expected negative impact on a large number of European duty stations. The Committee requested that the implementation of the survey results be carefully planned and prepared, in particular through appropriate communication by ICSC well in advance of an implementation date, and that such implementation would be phased in a gradual manner in order to mitigate negative impact on staff;**

(f) **Endorsed the Human Resources Network strategic workplan, and requested the Network to revert to the Committee with concrete deliverables, timelines, responsibilities and resource requirements.**

D. Innovation, experimentation, transparency and accountability

1. Adoption of a United Nations common documentation standard

82. The Vice-Chair opened the discussion on the United Nations common documentation standard by noting that the use of information and communications technology as an agent of change and a driver of innovation in business models remained a priority for the Committee. Recalling the successful practice of adopting internationally recognized standards, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative, the Vice-Chair invited the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management to introduce the United Nations semantic interoperability framework.

83. The Under-Secretary-General opened her remarks by commending the dedication and collaborative spirit of the Committee working group on document standards, led by the Committee secretariat, FAO and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. She noted that, through a careful analysis of all document classes, and with the benefit of an advisory board composed of organizations with prior experience in Extensible Markup Language (XML) implementation, such as the European Parliament, the Italian Senate, the House of Representatives of the United States of America and the National Archives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the working group succeeded in creating a unique customization of the Akoma Ntoso XML standard for United Nations documents known as "Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations" (AKN4UN). This customized standard would allow the United Nations system to model its documents in XML in a uniform and intelligible manner, fostering system-wide document interoperability and setting the foundation for future collaboration in this area. The standard also included guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents, providing a detailed description of the customized standard and a comprehensive guide to model United Nations documents in all respects, from structure and metadata to semantic content and linked concepts.

84. In addition, the working group also created the first United Nations document ontology, a framework for the description of all components of United Nations documents and the links that could exist among them, allowing for a United Nations-wide ecosystem of machine-readable documents that would prove to be a considerable asset for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and which offered a robust framework for evidence-based policies and accountability. The Under-Secretary-General also noted that implementation of

the standard had the potential, through automation, to substantially reduce the time required to process multilingual documentation, allowing specialists to perform tasks that added value as well as fostering transparency, since it allowed document content to be more easily searchable by stakeholders.

85. Implementation of the standard was now the next step, and the working group recommended to the Committee the adoption of a follow-up project on supporting the adoption and implementation of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework across the United Nations system. This project would seek to provide organizations with the support and coordination necessary to build the capacity needed to put the AKN4UN standard and the guidelines into practice.

86. The Under-Secretary-General also presented the eLUNa product, a web-based suite of language applications developed by the Secretariat based on XML technology. This system, surpassing anything currently available both in terms of performance and ease-of-use, consisted of a family of language tools that included interfaces for translation, revision, editorial work and a search application, as well as a series of applications for document and terminology management. It also included a machine translation function, developed by WIPO. Designed to meet the needs of United Nations organizations, eLUNa was entirely web-based, was simple to use, thereby reducing training time, and was continuously improved based on feedback from users. The editorial interface of eLUNa was the first step in the implementation of the Akoma Ntosa standard.

87. The Under-Secretary-General concluded her remarks by noting that the eLUNa product was currently used globally by 1,200 United Nations translators and in 2016 was used to translate more than 90 million words. As the eLUNa system was made available to other organizations, governance and financing structures were required so that interested organizations could adapt it to their environments. Should interest emerge from other organizations, the Secretariat would prepare a proposal for consideration by the Committee. Such a standardized approach would bring the United Nations system closer to achieving document interoperability in language services as exemplified by the AKN4UN initiative.

88. The Vice-Chair of the Committee then invited the Assistant Director General of FAO to present some of the implemented pilots that showcased the benefits and impact on the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of this new approach. The Assistant Director General noted that, as they implemented the system, the organization was experiencing significant reductions in the time required to prepare documents, especially as a result of the reduced need to manually format documents for presentation. A video presented to the Committee provided the details of six prototype applications developed by FAO that showcased the potential of the Akoma Ntoso standard for the United Nations in the management of governance and normative processes and in the creation of actionable information to support policy and decision-making. Four of the prototypes focused on access to information and two on enhancements to productivity. The prototype services included a portal for access to the FAO food safety standard (Codex Alimentarius); an interactive version of basic texts of FAO, such as its constitution and general rules; and enhancements to access to governing body documents that allowed for seamless contextual navigation between document types. These enhanced services were available in the six official languages.

89. The Vice-Chair noted that, although the working group had only formed in June 2016, through the dedication of the many participants from 16 organizations it was able to produce the standard within a record time. During the discussion, organizations commended the working group and expressed enthusiasm for supporting the adoption of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework

and its corresponding guidelines, with the understanding that they were living documents and would evolve over time to meet the needs of all organizations. There was agreement that this initiative would help realize further efficiencies. WIPO thanked the Committee for recognizing its contribution of the machine translation facility to the eLUNa system, and indicated that this service was still undergoing continuous development. WIPO offered this system to all organizations and was also working on a licence agreement aimed at formalizing the current practice with organizations. Under such a licence agreement, WIPO wished to continue to make this system available to all organizations on a worldwide basis, totally free of charge, subject to compliance with measures aimed at safeguarding its fundamental rights.

90. The Committee thanked the members of the working group and the leadership provided by FAO, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Committee secretariat.

91. **The High-level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Commended the work of the Committee's working group on document standards to develop a United Nations semantic interoperability framework for normative and parliamentary documents;**

(b) **Noted that the United Nations semantic interoperability framework created the foundation to harmonize machine-access to United Nations system normative and parliamentary documents on the basis of an internationally recognized standard that, while making normative and parliamentary documents more accessible and open to all stakeholders, would contain the system-wide long-term information management costs;**

(c) **Adopted the United Nations semantic interoperability framework for normative and parliamentary documents as outlined in document CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1 and formed by:**

(i) **Akoma Ntoso as the XML reference standard and in particular its customization into Akoma Ntoso for the United Nations System (AKN4UN), which identified the structural elements of Akoma Ntoso to be used in United Nations system documents;**

(ii) **The United Nations document ontology, which described the formal representation of United Nations documents and their relationships with each other and the entities they portrayed;**

(d) **Adopted the first version of the AKN4UN guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents and the United Nations document ontology as the main reference for the implementation of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework;**

(e) **Endorsed the proposal supporting the implementation of the United Nations common documentation standard across the United Nations system, as outlined in annex I to document CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1.**

2. Common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud

92. In the context of the consideration by the General Assembly of the fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat (A/70/668), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its report on the same subject (A/70/770), as endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 70/255, reiterated its view "that a single agreed definition, across the United Nations system, of what constitutes fraud, as well as cases of suspected or presumptive fraud, is essential in order to develop effective

counter-fraud policies to ensure compatibility and comparability of related data across entities and to improve overall transparency", and reiterated its opinion that CEB "would be best placed to develop such guidance so as to achieve consistent application across all organizations of the United Nations system".

93. A Committee task force on common definitions related to fraud and implementing partners was established in 2016 to carry out the work required to address the mandate of the General Assembly. The Co-Chair of the Finance and Budget Network, on behalf of the co-leaders of the task force, provided an overview of the work of the task force and introduced the common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud that the task force had agreed on. During his introduction, the Co-Chair emphasized that the objective of the task force had been to develop high-level definitions, as wide in scope as possible, recognizing the different business models of United Nations system organizations, and that further elaboration of the definitions, with more detail and examples as per specific requirements, could be integrated into the policies and/or frameworks of individual organizations, as appropriate.

94. During the discussion, Committee members expressed appreciation for the work of the task force and noted that the resulting definitions represented the best efforts for compatibility across United Nations system organizations. Some Committee members referred to the definition of fraudulent practice currently used by United Nations Development Group in legal instruments for pass-through funding, noting that this was aligned with the definition used by the multilateral development banks and had been adopted by some United Nations system organizations. The Co-Chair noted that there was currently no common definition adopted by all United Nations system organizations, and that while the task force had used the United Nations Development Group definition as a starting point for discussion, not all organizations had agreed to that definition and the final agreed definition of fraud had evolved to a broader, higher level definition that would encompass the definition used by United Nations Development Group.

95. The representative of the Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations (UN-RIAS) provided a statement on behalf of UN-RIAS and the United Nations Representatives of Investigative Services (UN-RIS), noting that UN-RIAS and UN-RIS had two main reservations regarding the proposed definition of fraud, and welcoming the fact that one of those reservations, regarding the inclusion of the word "material" in the definition ("knowingly misrepresents or conceals a *material* fact"), had been fully addressed by the task force. The other reservation related to the existence of the current United Nations Development Group definition and the potential for confusion when negotiating agreements if another definition existed alongside the United Nations Development Group definition. The Co-Chair of the Finance and Budget Network clarified that, following the endorsement by CEB of the common definitions for the United Nations system adopted by the task force, the definition used by the United Nations Development Group would eventually be replaced by the former. He further emphasized that the agreed common definitions of fraud were not inconsistent with those of the multilateral development banks or the United Nations Development Group pass-through agreement definitions, since they were broader and at a higher level, and incorporated the provisions of both the multilateral development banks and the United Nations Development Group definitions.

96. It was broadly agreed that Committee members did not have objections to the wording of the definitions, recognizing that the task force members had negotiated the definitions very thoroughly before reaching agreement on inclusive, high-level definitions. However, some members expressed a need for clarification as to the way that the new common definitions would be operationalized in each

organization, suggesting that perhaps more time should be taken for internal consultations within each organization. In the ensuing discussion the Committee Vice-Chair recalled paragraph 6 of document CEB/2017/HLCM/11, in which the task force had agreed that the proposed common definitions would provide a consistent and harmonized framework, within which organizations would have the autonomy and flexibility to further elaborate and define their implementation approaches and other operational details in their respective regulatory frameworks, legal instruments and policies, as appropriate, to meet their specific requirements and within the time frames appropriate to the circumstances of each organization. It was also recalled that there was great interest in these common United Nations system definitions from Member States, not only from the General Assembly but also within other governing bodies, and that addressing the mandate from the Assembly was a priority for the Secretary-General and CEB.

97. It was noted by UN-RIAS and Committee members that the next phase of work of the task force was very important and that, in accordance with its terms of reference, the task force would continue working in 2017 to develop common definitions for vendors, implementing partners and grant recipients. The task force would also explore the possibility of agreeing on common internal control parameters and criteria to be applied to arrangements with implementing partners and recipients of grants, and a menu of best practice principles. After completion of these activities, the next stage would be to look at developing an information-sharing platform for tracking and managing implementing partners, including an assessment as to what extent existing tools were already being used by organizations and which tools might be available.

98. **The High-Level Committee on Management:**

(a) **Recalled that the mandate to establish a single agreed definition across the United Nations system of what constituted fraud, as well as cases of presumptive fraud, had been reiterated several times by the General Assembly, and most recently in the context of its review of the sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat in March 2017;**

(b) **Adopted the common definition of fraud for the United Nations system as:**

> **"Any act or omission whereby an individual or entity knowingly misrepresents or conceals a fact (a) in order to obtain an undue benefit or advantage or avoid an obligation for himself, herself, itself or a third party, and/or (b) in such a way as to cause an individual or entity to act, or fail to act, to his, her or its detriment";**

(c) **Adopted the common definition of presumptive fraud for the United Nations system as:**

> **"Allegations that have been deemed to warrant an investigation and, if substantiated, would establish the existence of fraud resulting in loss of resources to the Organization";**

(d) **Noted that individual organizations would be expected to operationalize the agreed common definitions within their respective regulatory frameworks, legal instruments and policies, as appropriate, according to their specific requirements and within a time frame appropriate to the circumstances of each organization.**

Annex I

List of participants

Vice-Chair: Jan Beagle, Deputy Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

Secretary: Remo Lalli, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Simona Petrova, Director, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and Acting Secretary, United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations	**Yukio Takasu** Under-Secretary-General, Department of Management
	Peter Drennan Under-Secretary-General, Department of Safety and Security, and Chair, Inter-Agency Security Management Network
	Catherine Pollard Under-Secretary-General, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
	Antigoni Axenidou Director, General Legal Division, and Representative of the Legal Network
	Jillann Farmer Director, Medical Service Division, and Chair, Medical Directors Working Group
	Cecilia Elizalde Director, Documentation Division, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
	Christophe Monier Project Lead, Global Service Delivery Model Project, by videoconference
	Amr Nour Director, Regional Commissions New York Office
International Labour Organization	**Greg Vines** Deputy Director General
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	**Fernanda Guerrieri** Assistant Director General, Corporate Services Department
	Sylvain St. Pierre Head, Shared Service Centre, Budapest
	Helene Jasinski Deputy Chief, Budapest

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	**Getachew Engida** Deputy Director General
	Nutan Wozencroft Chief Financial Officer, Bureau of Financial Management
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	**Helen Frary** Senior Adviser, Change Management
International Civil Aviation Organization	**Vincent Smith** Director, Bureau of Administration and Services
World Health Organization	**Hans Troedsson** Assistant Director General
	Roberto Balsamo Management Officer
International Organization for Migration	**Laura Thompson** Deputy Director General
	Carlos Oliver Cruz Special Assistant to the Deputy Director General
	Marco Boasso Director, Global Administrative Centre, Manila
International Telecommunication Union	**Anders Norsker** Chief, Information Services, and Representative of Information and Communications Technology Network
World Meteorological Organization	**Angiolo Rolli** Director, Resource Management Department
International Maritime Organization	**Aubrey Botsford** Acting Director, Administrative Division
World Intellectual Property Organization	**Ambi Sundaram** Assistant Director General, Administration and Management
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	**Fatou Haidara** Managing Director, Policy and Programme Support, and Director ad interim, Department of Human Resources Management
	Konstantin Ivanov Officer-in-Charge, Department of Operational Support Services
World Tourism Organization	**José G. Blanch** Director, Administration Division
International Atomic Energy Agency	**Mary Alice Hayward** Deputy Director General and Head, Department of Management
	Neris Baez Garcia De Mazzora Chair, Procurement Network, and Director, Office of Procurement Services, Department of Management

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	**Adnan Issa** Chief, Resource Management Service
United Nations Development Programme	**Jens Wandel** Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Management Services
	Darshak Shah Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director
	Martha Helena López Director, Office of Human Resources
United Nations Environment Programme	**Theresa Panuccio** Director, Office for Operations and Corporate Services
Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees	**Kelly Clements** Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees
	Shoko Shimozawa Head, Global Service Centre
United Nations Children's Fund	**Eva Mennel** Director, Division of Human Resources
	Mark Beatty Director, Global Shared Services Centre
	Lori Issa Executive Manager, Office of the Executive Director
	Madhavi Ashok Senior Adviser, United Nations Partnerships
	Luis Soares Chief, Service Quality Management
United Nations Population Fund	**Laura Londén** Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Management)
World Food Programme	**Calum Gardner** Director, Budget Services
	Lidia Tutarinova Inter-agency Coordinator to the Assistant Executive Director
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	**Dennis Thatchaichawalit** Director, Division of Management
	Polinikis Sophocleous Chief, Financial Resources Management Service
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	**Andrew Cox** Director, Management and Operations Division

Organizations	*Name title and division*
United Nations Office for Project Services	**Vitaly Vanshelboim** Deputy Executive Director
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	**Moez Doraid** Director, Management and Administration
International Trade Centre	**Gerry Lynch** Director, Division of Programme Support
World Bank	**Björn Gillsäter** Manager, World Bank Group, New York Office
International Monetary Fund	**Chris Hemus** Director, Corporate Services and Facilities Department
Other representatives:	
United Nations System Staff College	**Claire Messina** Deputy Director, Programme Management and Business Development
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	**Patrick Grenard** Director, Administration
International Civil Service Commission	**Wolfgang Stoeckl** Vice-Chair
High-level Committee on Programmes	**Kayoko Gotoh** Secretary
Representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations	**Anthony Watson** Chief Internal Auditor, International Labour Organization
United Nations Development Group	**John Hendra** Co-Chair, United Nations Development Group Working Group on Leadership, by videoconference
	Sarmad Khan Team Leader and Policy Adviser, Leadership Development, by videoconference
United Nations Development Group/ Development Operations Coordination Office	**Anders Voigt** Business Operations Adviser
Federation of International Civil Servants' Association	**Peter Kakuska** Member, Executive Committee
	Imed Zabaar Former Member, Executive Committee

Annex II

Checklist of documents

Item	*Title*	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Provisional agenda	n.a.	CEB/2017/HLCM/1/Rev.3
	Provisional programme of work		CEB/2017/HLCM/1/Add.1/Rev.1
A.	**High-level Committee on Management strategic plan 2017-2020**	Yes	CEB/2016/HLCM/15
	Results framework strategic plan 2017-2020		CEB/2016/HLCM/15/Add.1/Rev.1
	Letter from the Deputy Secretary-General on the review of the United Nations development system		CEB/2017/HLCM/INF.1
B.	**Outline of the session**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/2
	Update on global service delivery solutions in the United Nations system		CEB/2017/HLCM/3
	Use of key performance indicators for performance of service centres		CEB/2017/HLCM/3/Add.1
	Progress with global service delivery solutions in the United Nations system		CEB/2015/HLCM/11
	The role of service centres in redesigning administrative service delivery		JIU/REP/2016/11
	Consultant report with feasibility study and business case for joint facility classification and reference checking	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/4
C.	**Briefing note on the cross-functional task force on duty of care**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/6
	Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the current security environment for United Nations personnel	Yes	Summary sheet only
	Final report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network at its twenty-fifth session		n.a.
	United Nations system leadership framework	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/7
	Briefing note by the Human Resources Network on the outcome of the International Civil Service Commission at its eighty-fourth session	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/8
	Human Resources Network strategic workplan 2017-2020		CEB/2017/HLCM/9
D	**Working group on document standards: recommendations to the High-level Committee on Management for the adoption of the United Nations semantic interoperability framework**	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Rev.1

Item	*Title*	*Summary sheet*	*Document symbol*
	Working group on document standards: guidelines for the markup of United Nations normative and parliamentary documents (AKN4UN)		CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Annex 2
	Working group on document standards: a framework for the description of United Nations system documents and their relationships with each other and the entities they portray		CEB/2017/HLCM/10/Annex 3
	Common definitions of fraud and presumptive fraud	Yes	CEB/2017/HLCM/11
	A new environment for the United Nations	Yes	Summary sheet only

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

12 June 2017

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 16 and 17 March 2017)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-third session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 16 and 17 March 2017. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II, respectively, to the present report.

2. In opening the session of the Committee, its Chair, Margaret Chan, reaffirmed the Committee's pivotal role in providing intellectual impetus to the deliberations of CEB by serving as the think tank of the United Nations system on strategic issues of system-wide concern. The challenges that the world was facing today had been nearly unimaginable at the time when the United Nations was founded. International cooperation and the United Nations were needed more than ever; yet, increasingly, the established international order and multilateralism themselves were being questioned as to their effectiveness, continued utility and even the values for which they stood. Faced with this evolving environment, the United Nations needed to change, adapt and become more creative, agile and action-oriented. Indeed, in outlining his inaugural vision, the Secretary-General had called for a revitalized United Nations, better able to confront global challenges through, inter alia, coherent collective action. Responding to this call and reminding the Committee that good intentions without implementation were intentions on paper only, the Chair urged the Committee to tap into its collective knowledge, articulate its joint vision and goals and stimulate thinking, as one system, about new and innovative ways to not only enhance the immediate impact of its work but also position the United Nations system strategically for the longer-term future.

II. Agenda item 1: Risk, resilience and prevention

3. The Chair introduced the agenda item on risk, resilience and prevention by recalling previous discussions among the members of the Committee on this topic and noting the timeliness of this initiative, which would support the Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention.

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4. The Chief of the Emergencies and Transitions Unit in the Policy and Programme Division of the World Food Programme (WFP), Paul Howe, presented the work to date by the Committee task team on risk and resilience. The team's effort was aimed at establishing a common understanding among development, humanitarian, peace and security and human rights actors of the concepts of risk and resilience and their application across the different pillars for supporting risk-informed planning and programming.

5. The task team had confirmed four main findings to date: risk and resilience could serve as useful framing concepts for managing crises proactively, with prevention as one set of actions within the larger frame; a risk and resilience approach had to account for the complex, interconnected reality; risk and resilience could serve as common threads across United Nations pillars; and development work and the shocks that disrupted it were intrinsically connected and could not be separated.

6. The Chief of the Emergencies and Transitions Unit then introduced the three elements of a proposed approach to engage and manage crises: using "systems thinking" to better understand complex interlinkages and identify the key "pressure points" within the development system of a country; applying the risk and resilience equation to promote coherence among the efforts made across pillars at those pressure points; and using a prevention lens to ensure a proactive approach to preventing threats and avoiding future crises.

7. Four practical applications of the risk and resilience approach were proposed for the Committee's consideration. First, the approach could be employed on a pilot basis to organize system-wide thinking about dealing with the risks associated with one or more of the "frontier issues" identified by the Committee during the present session. Second, the approach could be used at the country level to better coordinate United Nations system interventions, by helping to provide a framework for joint analysis and informing the identification of collective outcomes for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Third, highlighting that systems thinking was an important tool in that approach as well as a critical behaviour under the United Nations system leadership framework, the approach could potentially be incorporated into leadership training. Finally, the approach could bring greater conceptual clarity to and help to harmonize numerous terminologies and integrative efforts emerging from different pillars.

8. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the work done so far and concurred broadly with the direction taken and the next steps proposed by the task team. In particular, members recognized the value of having harmonized a common conceptual understanding and of now making headway towards a shared analytical framework to support risk-informed joint situation analysis and complementary actions among the various pillars to manage the pressure points collectively. Many members stressed that, in order to have an impact, the analysis would need to be underpinned by quality disaggregated data and translated into joint planning and programming that supported the Governments' priorities and utilized existing tools and diverse organizational strengths. In view of the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognizing that risk affected all people, the approach's applicability to all country contexts was seen as its unique strength, and, to that end, sufficient flexibility needed to be built into it.

9. The Committee noted that, since risks were context-specific, the true test for the proposed approach was its application to a real-life situation. Members, thus, welcomed the fact that the conceptual aspects of this work were nearing their finalization and expressed support for the proposal to "pilot-apply" this approach, either proactively to frontier issues, or in a lesson-learning mode, to specific

operational contexts, such as the Ebola crisis or the Arab Spring. It was observed that financing remained the one game-changing factor with the power to enable (or disrupt) cross-pillar operational coherence, as evidenced by the recent International Development Association replenishments.

10. With a view to finalizing the approach at the conceptual level, suggestions were made to stress its universal applicability and to highlight its relevant normative parameters, emphasizing the human rights dimension. A suggestion was also made to include conceptual clarification of the linkage and complementarity of various terminologies and approaches emanating from different pillars, building on the task team's earlier work. Several members also offered suggestions for improving the diagram, depicting cross-pillar actions to reduce risk and increase resilience.

Conclusion

11. **The Committee confirmed its support for the risk and resilience approach and requested that the task team, under the continued leadership of WFP, take into consideration the Committee's feedback and submit its final and concluding work to the Committee at its thirty-fourth session. The Committee also requested the task team to pilot the approach by applying it to a few specific contexts, including "frontier issues" identified by the Committee at the present session, in order to demonstrate its practical applicability.**

III. Agenda item 2: Cross-pillar linkages and coherence

12. Using the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a case study to illustrate how the organization worked across the pillars of the Charter of the United Nations, the Deputy Director of Planning of UNRWA, Sam Rose, presented an analytical paper as a practical input to the Committee's continued efforts to enhance cross-pillar linkages and integration. For almost 70 years, UNRWA had delivered a combination of humanitarian and development services to generations of Palestinian refugees living in five distinct geographic areas: Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. The Deputy Director highlighted three factors that had facilitated coherence across UNRWA multidimensional activities: the role of leadership and institutional culture, rather than structure, in overcoming the humanitarian-development divide; an innovative partnership and governance model by which specialized expertise was provided by technical United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for education and the World Health Organization (WHO) for health, under the overall leadership of UNRWA; and an approach to integrated planning and implementation that focused on collective outcomes and included all funding, regardless of source, for example, the delivery of human development outcomes in crisis situations, such as education in emergency settings.

14. While UNRWA was often referred to as "one United Nations for Palestinian refugees", the Deputy Director cautioned against the temptation to present the agency as a "poster child" for cross-pillar integration, noting that the organization's continued existence was in itself a manifestation of failure to deliver peace and security to the Palestinian people. Though not a political organization and without a mandate to engage in the peace process, UNRWA had, nevertheless, contributed to stability in the region, including by lessening the burden faced by host countries. To recognize and encourage the varied contributions of the United Nations system to

peace and stability, a more nuanced and a broader definition of peacebuilding was seen as necessary.

15. Expressing its appreciation to UNRWA for presenting a valuable "reality check" of the Committee's continuing work, the Committee noted that this field-based analysis validated the key enablers of cross-pillar coherence identified through the Committee's analytical work on the topic so far, namely, leadership, shared vision/collective outcomes, integrated planning and systems thinking, innovative partnerships and collaboration, and flexible funding.

16. Several members observed that the UNRWA experience demonstrated the power of an integrated approach by which positive humanitarian and development outcomes had a stabilizing effect in a politically volatile region. At the same time, it showed the limitations and dilemmas faced in a protracted crisis where one pillar — peace and security — continued to fail to deliver. The recent emergence of broader approaches to cross-pillar coherence, for example, sustaining peace, was seen as useful to capturing such complexity, while further reflection was noted as still necessary to fully clarify interconnections of pillar-specific dynamics and requirements across them.

Conclusion

17. **The Chair observed that the Committee's conceptual examination of cross-pillar coherence thus far seemed to have passed the test of field validation. Referring to the discussion on agenda item 1, she noted the Committee's broad support for the need for greater conceptual clarity across numerous integration-related approaches, that is, a conceptual framework that could illuminate interlinkages and complementarities, and pillar-specific requirements and sensitivities that might require clarification. The risk and resilience approach discussed earlier in the session could usefully be applied to underpin such analytical work.**

IV. Agenda item 3: Climate change

18. On behalf of the three Assistant Secretaries-General of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, who had been tasked by the Committee, at its thirty-second session, to prepare, in consultation with key stakeholders, a United Nations system strategic approach to climate change action, the representatives of UNEP (Elliott Harris) and UNDP (Magdy Martínez-Solimán) introduced a draft for the Committee's approval and onward submission to CEB for endorsement.

19. In introducing the document, the representative of UNEP highlighted that the proposed strategic approach concluded the two-year task, pursued under the Committee, to develop an approach through which the United Nations system collaboration and joint action on climate change in follow-up to the Paris Agreement could be concretely improved. He noted that the approach was grounded in the United Nations system's collective commitment to supporting Member States in the implementation of key global frameworks and agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The strategic approach was underpinned by the CEB common core principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate change action, approved by the Committee at its thirty-first session, and intended to advance their operationalization.

20. The representative of UNEP further explained that the proposed strategic approach had been developed through an inclusive consultative process involving a task team of 18 self-nominated United Nations entities, under the leadership of UNDP, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and reflected the joint priorities and existing capacities of the United Nations system in the area of climate change action. In keeping with the directives of CEB and the Committee, the approach was light-handed and built on existing collaboration and joint initiatives. It consisted of eight thematic impact areas that had been identified as specific to joint climate action in order to deliver results for Member States through improved and increased collaboration among United Nations system entities.

21. Focusing on the implementation and delivery of the proposed strategic approach, the representative of UNDP stressed that that approach galvanized actions that maximized collaboration within the United Nations system, based on existing work under way and where joint approaches could address new challenges and improve effectiveness. As such, the approach would be implemented through existing tools and mechanisms at the global, regional and country levels in an effort to leverage available United Nations system expertise and avoid duplication and redundancies. Once the approach had been adopted by the Committee and CEB, its implementation could commence expeditiously with a view to maximizing synergies and delivering benefits across the global sustainable development and climate change agreements.

22. The Committee unanimously supported the adoption of the strategic approach, noting the collaborative and consultative manner in which it had been developed. Some suggestions, such as on the importance of regional dimensions, the need for disaggregated data and the inclusion of human rights when addressing nexus issues, were made for reflection in the final version. Several members of the Committee took that opportunity to highlight climate change issues and activities relevant to their entities, and indicated their interest in actively contributing to the implementation of the strategic approach by supporting joint actions in specific impact areas. Some members also expressed support for a proposal, put forth by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to showcase progress in deepening United Nations system collaboration and joint action on climate change during the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in 2018.

Conclusion

23. **The Committee approved the United Nations system strategic approach to climate change action (CEB/2017/4/Add.1), subject to the incorporation of minor revisions emanating from the discussion, for onward submission to CEB for its endorsement. With this approval, this long-standing agenda item reached its conclusion.**

V. Agenda item 4: United Nations system leadership framework

24. The Chair invited the three co-leaders of the initiative to introduce the draft United Nations system leadership framework that was before the Committee for approval. The leader of the joint High-level Committee on Programmes/High-level Committee on Management task team, Claire Messina, and the Co-Chairs of the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Leadership, John Hendra and Craig Mokhiber, jointly recounted the collaborative work undertaken by the Development Group, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management to develop the joint proposal. They reminded the

Committee that the framework directly supported Principle 10 (global United Nations system workforce and transformative leadership) of the CEB common principles to guide the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and recalled that the framework had been intended to serve as a strategic organizational tool and be applicable to staff at all levels. It was based on the eight defining characteristics of United Nations leadership as endorsed by the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-second session, namely, the fact of being norm-based, principled, inclusive, accountable, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative and self-applied.

25. The four key ways in which the leadership behaviours would manifest themselves in support of the 2030 Agenda, namely, through systems-thinking, co-creation within the United Nations system and with external partners, focusing on benefiting the most vulnerable and driving transformational change, were then presented. With regard to operationalizing the framework, an "opt-in" approach would be taken, permitting agencies to plan how to internalize it as appropriate to their unique needs. It was stressed that the framework was not merely a tool for human resources management framework, but also a way to foster broader cultural change, and that the key drivers of the required change were ownership by senior United Nations leaders, active engagement and involvement by all staff and the alignment of structures, systems, policies and processes to create an environment in which leadership could flourish.

26. The Committee fully supported the leadership characteristics and behaviours articulated in the framework and welcomed its aspirational nature. While recognizing the diversity within the United Nations system, members nevertheless strongly underscored the importance and value of having a shared vision and common standards to which to strive collectively. Principled leadership, in particular, was seen as a requisite quality for all United Nations leaders — key to asserting universal and internationally recognized norms and values, such as those of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, among others, and for building trust and safeguarding the system's reputation, which were more critical than ever in the current environment.

27. It was suggested that adaptability was a leadership trait that could be emphasized more strongly in the framework and also that a reference to the importance of attitude (as distinct from and in addition to behaviours, skills and competencies) should be reinstated in the document. Accountability to the model was stressed, and members agreed that appropriate performance assessment would be needed to ensure that United Nations system staff were working to personify the framework. More thought was needed about ways to motivate leaders.

28. Several members appreciated that the implementation of the framework would be flexible and respect the diversity of United Nations system organizations and their specific needs, while still guiding the entities to harmonize around core values. Organizations choosing to opt in would need to develop internal implementation road maps based on their individual business models, with sufficient space to determine by themselves how they would align their organizational cultures to the framework.

29. The Committee saw the leadership framework as an important element of a broader change agenda. While acknowledging that the change was necessary, some members highlighted the challenges of reshaping organizational culture and the need to be realistic in setting expectations about what could be achieved in what time frame, given the variety of constraints faced by United Nations system organizations. The executive heads could send a powerful signal to their

organizations by leading by example and actively promoting and enabling the needed change.

30. It was noted that robust implementation of the framework may require additional resources. Indeed, investing in staff training was seen as essential to meeting the framework's aspirations. While it might not always be easy to secure such funding, a suggestion was made to start by ensuring that resources already available be used strategically and to the maximum impact, in line with the aims of the framework.

Conclusion

31. **The Committee approved the United Nations system leadership framework, with due incorporation of suggested changes, for onward submission (pending the approval of the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group) to CEB for endorsement.**

VI. Agenda item 5: Scoping discussion on system-wide strategic coherence as a key driver for addressing global challenges

32. The Chair recalled that, in articulating the challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations today, the Secretary-General had underscored the critical importance of understanding global megatrends: multiple, evolving and mutually reinforcing shifts of a geopolitical, demographic, climatic, technological, social and economic nature that were advancing at an unprecedented pace, on the one hand creating unparalleled conditions for progress, and on the other hand upending the established order, generating tensions and changing the nature of threats. She referred to a set of background analyses shared in preparation for the present discussion, which clearly articulated that big global trends, such as rapid urbanization, changing climate, scarcer resources, shifting global economic power, demographic changes, growing social and cultural tensions and technological and scientific breakthroughs, were, individually and in combination, radically changing the global landscape. The Chair underscored that in order to remain relevant in the future world, the United Nations system must adapt nimbly to such changes.

33. Two expert speakers shared their technical perspectives as a contribution to the Committee's broad discussion on global trends and frontier issues of system-wide concern, which was aimed at identifying priorities for action by the Committee. The Director of the Population Division, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, John Wilmoth, outlined four key global demographic trends that would have critical consequences across social, economic and environmental spheres: ageing in developed countries, population growth in developing countries, increasing migration and rising urbanization. The projections highlighted the critical implications for the balance and transfer of wealth between generations and signalled that cities would be the primary setting for seizing the opportunities for sustainable development. The Director of the United Nations Global Pulse, Robert Kirkpatrick, reflected on the implications of artificial intelligence and automation, two rapidly developing fields particularly ripe for United Nations attention. He recognized artificial intelligence as a critical component to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, while also noting cautionary views that it could pose an existential threat to humanity. Automation increased efficiency and convenience in daily lives, but also threatened jobs across a wide range of sectors, confronting policymakers with difficult questions and trade-offs. In these and other technological advancements, Mr. Kirkpatrick saw the opportunity for the United

Nations to take the lead in shaping fundamental norms and fostering policies benefiting sustainable development.

34. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee acknowledged that these rapidly developing and converging new realities called for an urgent re-examination of the relevance of the United Nations and its added value in the future world. A strategic repositioning was essential, requiring significant cultural, organizational and operational changes within the United Nations system. Conventions, treaties and other international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals, already provided the overarching normative framework of global values against which frontier issues and their implications for the future of people and the planet needed to be monitored and assessed. While the frontier issues were largely driven by non-State actors, such as the private sector, academia and influential individuals, formal, structured and often time-consuming governance by both national Governments and intergovernmental institutions had lagged seriously behind in guiding the process.

35. There was consensus among Committee members that the United Nations system needed to position itself strategically to fill the governance vacuum by providing the moral compass at the vanguard of change and innovation. Ultimately, the United Nations would have to aim to ensure that scientific and technological advances benefited human well-being. To fulfil its role as catalyst, the United Nations needed to forge partnerships and form platforms that went well beyond traditional nation State partners.

36. During the discussion, Committee members identified a wide variety of issues emerging from global megatrends that were of relevance to the whole United Nations system and whose trajectory the system had a role to play in influencing. Broadly speaking, such issues could be grouped into five categories of disruption: social, economic, ecological, technological and political. The Committee acknowledged that most of these issues were interlinked and formed a complex network, or nexus, of interrelated and dynamic forces whose speed and trajectory were not always linear. Committee members considered that the United Nations was particularly well equipped to support policy coherence at the nexus of multiple frontier issues for the benefit of sustainable peace and development.

37. Much human progress had been made possible as a result of technological and scientific innovations and advances, ranging from the way diseases had been diagnosed and treated to modern means of transportation and communication. Traditionally, the driving force behind those innovations had been and continued to be the private sector. However, as technological change accelerated and expanded into ever greater ungoverned and unregulated territories, so did its potential to disrupt the established social, economic, political and cultural order profoundly. Advances in the areas of artificial intelligence, automation, drone technology and geoengineering brought with them many opportunities and risks, and even "existential threats", including profound changes to the nature and modality of work, and new means of warfare and of exercising control over peoples' movements.

38. Current demographic trends had given rise to new groups of people who risk being left behind, including older and disabled persons. Gender equality also still remained elusive in much of the world today. Growing economic and social inequalities worldwide had given rise to mounting tensions in many societies and an increase in nativist and xenophobic tendencies. Closely related to that trend was the rise in human mobility, both voluntary migration and forced displacement, across borders and within countries. Rapid and unplanned urbanization, which was especially pronounced in fragile States, had become increasingly delinked from

industrialization and, hence, formal wealth creation, with serious implications for human health, well-being and safety, and natural resources management. Crime and corruption further hindered efforts by local authorities to address the implications of unregulated urbanization adequately.

39. The effects of climate change, the resulting environmental degradation and the more frequent occurrence of natural disasters would greatly affect almost every aspect of human existence in the future. Environmental displacement and the number of climate refugees were expected to increase significantly as migration was seen more and more as a viable strategy for adapting to climate change, resulting in heightened stress on host communities. Growing food insecurity and water scarcity in areas most affected by climate change were expected to exacerbate social tensions in some regions. The nexus of climate change, migration and conflict needed further exploration. The Committee agreed unanimously that climate change must remain a top priority issue for the United Nations system, especially in the current political climate.

40. A striking commonality cutting across many of the frontier issues identified by the Committee as relevant to the United Nations system was the diminished role and ability of Governments, public institutions and international organizations to address and respond to the trends and changes unfolding around them and deeply affecting societies and their people. The erosion of trust in Governments, and their failure to govern effectively, had resulted in a crisis of legitimacy that was only deepening as public institutions were falling further behind non-State actors in their capacity to direct change. Multilateralism in general and the United Nations in particular were not isolated from this trend. The Committee was unanimous in stressing the urgent need for global institutions to reinvent themselves to win back trust in multilateralism, universal values and their continued relevance. It also acknowledged the importance of engaging and empowering young people, especially women, in decision-making, which was imperative to ensure future stability, prosperity and peace.

41. Committee members were also united in their conviction that the United Nations system needed to enhance its adaptability and capacity to respond to frontier challenges by becoming more agile, creative, proactive and streamlined. Finding effective ways to engage non-State actors constructively was an important part of such change. Changes to the organizational and leadership culture, with a focus on restoring legitimacy, accountability and transparency, were as necessary as a greater commitment to delivering shared outcomes and communicating with one voice.

42. The United Nations system needed to move from coordination to (inter)connectivity in order to advocate effectively and uphold universal norms and standards and United Nations core values in a world characterized by multiple power nodes and centres of gravity. Through the strategic and targeted use of all forms of media, the United Nations system had the opportunity to expand partnerships and supportive constituencies and forge direct connections with people, in particular youth, in order to promote its values. Against a backdrop of proliferating misinformation, evidence-based messaging and proactive advocacy of proven relevance were more important than ever. A commitment to sharing data and information among United Nations system entities was a critical prerequisite to supporting evidence-based decision-making, policy-setting and advocacy.

Conclusion

43. **The Committee Chair requested the secretariat of the Committee to prepare, as an input to the Chair's contribution to the discussions at the**

upcoming CEB session, a compilation of the key frontier issues of relevance to the entire United Nations system, as identified by the Committee. As suggested by some members, based on the guidance emanating from the CEB session, the Committee might consider engaging in more in-depth examinations of particularly relevant issues, possibly before the thirty-fourth session of the Committee.

VII. Agenda item 6: Summary of information items — Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

44. Pending an advance electronic review and due incorporation of comments received, the Committee formally took note of an intersessional progress report on the ongoing effort to mainstream the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 into the work programmes of United Nations system organizations, submitted by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The Committee took special note of the United Nations system's ongoing efforts to contribute to enhancing the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries, as mandated in the political declaration adopted at the midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action, in May 2016.

Conclusion

45. **The Committee took note of the progress made, including the six recommendations to increase the coverage, scope and effectiveness of the United Nations system support for investment promotion in the least developed countries.**

VIII. Agenda item 7: Other matters

A. Dates and venue of the thirty-fourth session of the High-level Committee on Programmes

46. Committee members were informed that a decision on the dates and venue of the thirty-fourth session of the Committee would be postponed to a time when the incoming Chair of the Committee could be consulted. As soon as this became possible, the Committee secretariat would communicate the proposed dates to Committee members.

B. Any other business

47. Completing her tenure as the Committee Chair at the present session, Ms. Chan commended the Committee members' capacity and willingness to engage in active, candid, innovative and "non-siloed" thinking about a range of strategic issues, with the shared aim of enhancing the work of the United Nations system as a whole. The Committee, in a standing ovation, expressed its deep appreciation for Ms. Chan's inspirational leadership, which had pushed and enabled it to think as one, "out of the box" and for the future in order to fulfil its role as the United Nations system's think tank and a key driver of its strategic and policy coherence.

Annex I

Agenda

Item 1. Risk, resilience and prevention

Item 2. Cross-pillar linkages and coherence

Item 3. Climate change

Item 4. United Nations system leadership framework

Item 5. Scoping discussion on system-wide strategic coherence as a key driver for addressing global challenges

Item 6. Summary of information items — Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

Item 7. Other matters

(a) Dates and venue of the thirty-fourth session of the High-level Committee on Programmes

(b) Any other business

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Margaret Chan (World Health Organization)

Vice-Chair: Navid Hanif (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

Secretary: Kayoko Gotoh

United Nations	
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Michelle Gyles-McDonnough
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	John Wilmoth
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Hansjoerg Strohmeyer
	Murad Jeridi
	Reena Ghelani
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Craig Mokhiber
Regional commissions	Amr Nour
	Gulnara Roll
Office for Disaster Risk Reduction	Robert Glasser
	Shoko Arakaki
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Daniele Violetti
Department of Political Affairs	Stephen Jackson
Peacebuilding Support Office	Henk-Jan Brinkman
Global Pulse	Robert Kirkpatrick
International Labour Organization	Vinicius Pinheiro
	Amber Barth
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Carla Mucavi
	Lucas Tavares
	Armine Avagyan
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Marie-Ange Théobald
World Health Organization	Dr. Nata Menabde
	Werner Obermeyer
	Ivana Milovanovic
World Bank Group	Björn Erik Gillsäter

International Monetary Fund	Christopher Lane
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mitchell Fox
International Telecommunication Union	Gary Fowlie
World Meteorological Organization	Paul Egerton
International Maritime Organization	Jesper Loldrup
World Intellectual Property Organization	Lucinda Longcroft
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Deirdre McGrenra
United National Industrial Development Organization	Paul Maseli
World Tourism Organization	Cordula Wohlmuther
	Kazi Rahman
International Atomic Energy Agency	Xolisa Mabhongo
International Organization for Migration	Ashraf El Nour
	Christopher Richter
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Paul Akiwumi
United Nations Development Programme	Magdy Martínez-Solimán
	Amanda Bergstrom
	Vanda Santos
United Nations Environment Programme	Elliott Harris
	Maaike Jansen
	Yoshie Fujiyama
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Arafat Jamal
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Sam Rose
United Nations Children's Fund	Olav Kjørven
	Madhavi Ashok
	Yuka Nakamura
United Nations Population Fund	Ramiz Alakbarov
	Alexander Pak
World Food Programme	Stanlake Samkange
	Paul Howe
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Gillian Murray

United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Filiep Decorte
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Aparna Mehrotra
United Nations University	James Cockayne
	Julia Blocher
United Nations System Staff College	Claire Messina
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Abigail David
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard
United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office	Alex Warren-Rodriguez
Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Simona Petrova
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Chief Executives Board for Coordination

12 June 2017

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session

United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action

I. Overview and vision

1. The United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action is guided by the collective commitment of the United Nations system to improving collaboration and the delivery of support on climate change to Member States in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development era of implementation. The Strategic Approach is situated within this external context and will be used specifically to:

- **Respond to the comprehensive and ambitious sustainable development and climate change** architecture recently established, including, but not limited to, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the New Urban Agenda,[1] as well as to the growing challenges that climate change presents for sustainable development, responding to humanitarian need and sustaining peace;
- **Promote the role of the United Nations in advancing climate change action and sustainable development as one coherent and mutually reinforcing agenda**, including through support to Member States for implementation, to avoid duplication in activities and to capitalize on available expertise across the United Nations system;
- **Enable, inspire and guide the United Nations system**, building on existing activities and seeking to enhance the leveraging of synergies.

2. In order to be effective in supporting the United Nations system, the Strategic Approach is underpinned by and supports the following principles:

- **Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Common Core Principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate action**, which include pursuing human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches and working through partnerships such as with the private sector and civil society organizations;

[1] Other relevant agreements are noted in principle B of the Common Core Principles (see annex).

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- **CEB common principles to guide the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development**;
- **United Nations Development Group core principles of collaboration for delivering together in support of the 2030 Agenda**.[2]

3. The Strategic Approach is expected to be implemented over the period 2017-2020, after which it could be reviewed, extended or refreshed.

II. Understanding the aims of the Strategic Approach

4. By serving as a unifying vision for collaborative United Nations action on climate change, the Strategic Approach will be a driver and tool for the United Nations system to achieve the objectives and outcomes outlined below.

Objectives

- **To reinforce and operationalize the Common Core Principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate action as a guiding framework for inter-agency collaboration on climate change** where a joint United Nations system response would achieve the best possible support for Member States in undertaking climate action.
- **To encourage and guide integrated action** in the areas of climate change and sustainable development and to deliver co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, so as to enable the United Nations system to provide better support to Member States to advance those two objectives in tandem.
- **To identify and foster action in key impact areas** of relevance to the climate change agenda where improved collaboration and shared expertise are needed and add value.
- **To ensure coherent and, where possible, joint approaches to the country-level work on climate change carried out by the United Nations**, in line with agreed United Nations Development Group principles for delivering together.

Outcomes

- **Improved United Nations system-wide promotion of and guidance on** synergies between different recent global agreements to ensure coherent and streamlined support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.
- **Stronger linkages** between policy and operational aspects of the United Nations system's work in support of Member States, including by operationalizing the Common Core Principles.
- **Improved coordination efforts** in the areas of climate change that are focused on delivering tangible results and a real, measurable impact on the ground.
- **Improved United Nations system collaboration** in key impact areas and processes, including emerging climate challenges where improved collaboration is needed.
- **Facilitated partnerships to improve collaboration and innovation**, including with the private sector and civil society.

[2] **Available from** https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UNDG-Support-for-Implementing-the-2030-Agenda.pdf.

- **Support for United Nations system-wide accountability** on climate action by deepening United Nations corporate sustainability efforts,[3] including by further scaling up action to achieve its commitment to climate neutrality by 2020 and by contributing to emissions reduction through programming.
- **Increased clarity** on the United Nations system's services offered to Member States to implement climate action in support of new and relevant frameworks and agreements.
- **More effective use of resources** by pooling expertise and maximizing synergies across the system through increased inter-agency collaboration to enable more effective climate change outcomes, in particular on key impact areas.

III. Direct implementation of the Strategic Approach through impact areas for collaboration

5. On the basis of a consultative process with United Nations agencies, eight thematic impact areas have been identified that would benefit from improved and increased collaboration among agencies. These are areas where combining skills and expertise would ensure better climate support from United Nations agencies or where collective United Nations thinking would help to advance action on new and emerging issues.

6. The aim of the Strategic Approach is to galvanize United Nations action in those areas and provide specific recommendations where collective United Nations action can be taken. These recommendations relate to both how the United Nations can improve collaboration and convergence on joint climate action within the system and with partners and how the United Nations can better provide joint support on climate action to Member States at the global, regional and country levels. In all cases, the emphasis is on building upon and working through existing tools, initiatives and mechanisms, where feasible.

7. In United Nations programme countries, the implementation of the Strategic Approach will rest on existing inter-agency mechanisms for country-level operations, as agreed by the United Nations Development Group, namely, the resident coordinator system, the United Nations country team mechanism and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. It will also be guided by the principles agreed by the United Nations Development Group for delivering together in support of the 2030 Agenda, which highlight the importance of evidence-based, results-focused, innovative approaches that bring together the United Nations system to collectively support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through greater collaboration, coordination and, where possible, "joined-up" approaches, including joint programmes.

8. Listed below each impact area outline are the agencies that were involved in developing the recommendations and priorities for that impact area. The "facilitator agency" role has, so far, been to act as a focal point and to support coordination on the issue. It is not intended that facilitating agencies should act as the lead for all implementation in each area or as the permanent lead in those areas. In many instances, contributing agencies will be leading certain initiatives or programmatic responses that contribute to the overall impact area. Additional agencies are welcome and encouraged to join relevant impact areas to contribute to their outcomes and to supporting a system-wide approach.

[3] See www.greeningtheblue.org.

Normative guidance on climate change

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement will be facilitated by global, regional, national and local policies, with a high level of coordination and integration across sectors and, in some cases, within regional sectors across countries.

The United Nations system can provide coherent normative guidance on climate change in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development if it brings together its cumulative expertise and experiences and "delivers as one" at every step of the policy development process.

By "delivering as one", the entities of the United Nations system will be able to support individual countries and regions most efficiently, by assessing their existing normative systems, including legislation and policies and, where needed, further developing those systems so as to ensure delivery on nationally determined contributions and ensure coherence and linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as by enhancing Member State ownership of the relevant intergovernmental frameworks, goals and targets, while also enhancing their mutual reinforcement through interconnections and cross-referencing. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are the two main global forums where progress will be measured and further guidance provided. Their relevance and effectiveness will depend on the contributions and active promotion of the agendas of both organs in dozens of other intergovernmental forums and bodies, most of which are serviced by the United Nations system.

A number of important joint United Nations system initiatives are already under way, including with respect to strengthening legal frameworks on climate change at the national level; enhancing the protection of people displaced by climate change, managing disaster risk and mainstreaming migration, urban and other issues within existing national climate policies, through the development of guidelines and capacity-building tools; and supporting countries at the national level through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **United Nations system organizations should systematically seek input from the broader system to ensure that an integrated perspective is brought to bear in servicing global and regional intergovernmental forums and bodies, whenever such bodies address the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement;**
- **The United Nations system should continue to foster policy coherence on climate change at the national, regional and global levels, through concerted action;**
- **The United Nations system should develop and disseminate coherent messages for an integrated global response to the climate change challenge;**
- **The United Nations system should prioritize translating the Common Core Principles for a system-wide approach to climate action into specific recommendations for the delivery of consistent and complementary policy guidance on climate change by United Nations entities.**

Contributing agencies: Department of Economic and Social Affairs and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (facilitators), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as well as regional commissions.

Interrelationship between nationally determined contributions and Sustainable Development Goal implementation

The establishment of both nationally determined contributions[4] and the Sustainable Development Goals has created new mechanisms for tackling climate change, through which the United Nations system is expected to provide support to Member States. United Nations agencies helped many countries to formulate and submit their intended nationally determined contributions before the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Paris in 2015, and can continue to play a critical role in building readiness for implementation. In particular, the United Nations system can support increased ambition in the implementation of climate and sustainable development objectives and identify opportunities for joint implementation by which the nationally determined contributions can drive sustainable development and vice versa. To effectively achieve the nationally determined contributions, Member States will need to engage a range of stakeholders, including civil society, local authorities, financial institutions and the private sector. The United Nations, collectively, can act as a convener to bring these groups together at the global, regional and national levels.

Joint United Nations approaches in this area will help to ensure the pooling of knowledge and coordination in support of all sectors addressed by the nationally determined contributions, while drawing links with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The objective of collaborative United Nations system action on nationally determined contributions and Sustainable Development Goal implementation is therefore to pool and share expertise among entities in order to improve United Nations support to Member States in achieving nationally determined contributions and in facilitating synergies with Sustainable Development Goal implementation, including by facilitating country support and the regional sharing of knowledge and expertise. This action should be anchored in country ownership, leadership, commitment and mutual accountability and build on existing multi-stakeholder partnerships such as the NDC Partnership.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Collaboration through existing United Nations Development Group and other United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanisms to identify opportunities for synergizing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and of the nationally determined contributions, as well as the goals and targets of other recent frameworks and agreements, where complementary;**
- **Regular inter-agency sharing of experiences and examples on nationally determined contribution and Sustainable Development Goal implementation through existing platforms, including a shared database for Member States of all nationally determined contribution guidance documents, tools and expertise produced by the United Nations system and its entities;**
- **Coordination of and, where possible, joint approaches to the work of the United Nations in support of the development and implementation of nationally determined contributions at the country level.**

Contributing agencies: UNDP (facilitator), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), FAO, ILO, IOM, UNEP, UN-Habitat and UNIDO.

[4] See http://unfccc.int/focus/ndc_registry/items/9433.php.

Climate resilience and disaster risk reduction

The Paris Agreement established a global goal of "enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change". The aim of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is to strengthen resilience and reduce disaster risk through addressing exposure and vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards. Together, these instruments guide development towards risk-sensitive investments and resilience and are complemented by, and complementary to, other recent frameworks and agreements. For example, many Member States have included adaptation and disaster risk reduction in their nationally determined contributions.

The United Nations is in a unique position to make an impact. Joint United Nations initiatives are promoting policy coherence and supporting countries in integrating disaster and climate resilience into development and humanitarian interventions. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development, endorsed by the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination, provides a results-based framework for cooperation in disaster risk reduction. Strategic and policy aspects are overseen by the senior-level leadership group on disaster risk reduction for resilience.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Scale up joint action in transformative initiatives relating to climate information, early warning and preparedness, insurance and social protection, climate-smart agriculture, livelihoods, ecosystem restoration, water management and resilient cities and infrastructure, with joint capacity-building for risk-informed development warranting special attention;**
- **Set disaster risk reduction and resilience high on the political agenda through high-level advocacy and outreach for anticipating risk, absorbing shocks and reshaping development using existing forums, panels and platforms, including through Special Envoys;**
- **Deliver and track progress in the revised Plan of Action on disaster risk reduction for resilience and introduce strategic issues in climate change action for consideration by the senior-level leadership group;**
- **Provide coherent and, where possible, integrated support to national efforts, including in the context of the implementation of nationally determined contributions, on climate resilience and disaster risk reduction.**

Contributing agencies: Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (facilitator), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, ECA, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Science, technology, knowledge and innovation

The importance of science, technology and innovation and the role of United Nations in providing expertise and joint support to Member States have been recognized in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, among others.

The United Nations system has been collaborating on science, technology and innovation issues, including on the technology facilitation mechanism, and is actively involved in supporting science, technology and innovation actions that can act as the basis on which to scale up support and pursue collaborative action that supports Member States, from collaboration among United Nations agencies that provides high-level advice on relevant science, technology and innovation issues that bridge knowledge systems, to bringing indigenous knowledge into climate change research and assessments. Further collaboration that will be continued and strengthened facilitates the analysis and prediction of Earth system change so as to determine the predictability of climate and the effect of human activities on climate, as well as the impact of climate change on ecosystems and on human well-being.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Enable Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through training and education in science, technology and innovation, inclusive science, technology and innovation policies and strategies and the deployment of technologies, action plans and road maps in areas such as the environment, sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, industry, the economy and education;**
- **Share challenges, trends and solutions in science, technology and innovation needs and deployment for achieving climate goals and Sustainable Development Goals, including through technology needs assessments, an annual science, technology and innovation forum and joint reporting;**
- **Develop methodologies for Sustainable Development Goal indicators related to climate-relevant science, technology and innovation, building on existing efforts in this area, to help countries track the progress of their achievements;**
- **Strengthen the capacity of Member States to bring diverse knowledge systems into climate change decision-making through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the World Climate Research Programme and other mechanisms.**

Contributing agencies: UNEP (facilitator), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, ECA, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and WMO.

Data and observations

Data and observations provide critical evidence to underpin policy decisions on climate action by Governments around the world. Generating and exchanging harmonized, disaggregated and quality-assured data and performing reliable observations are mandated activities carried out by a number of United Nations agencies, including WMO, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF and IOM. Joint efforts among relevant United Nations agencies should build upon, integrate and improve existing and planned surface-based atmospheric measurement networks, airborne and satellite observations, modelling frameworks and data assimilation systems.

Significant numbers of United Nations inter-agency frameworks and mechanisms already exist for data and observations, providing an excellent basis for scaling up and strengthening United Nations collaboration and joint action in this area. Examples of such frameworks and mechanisms include a cooperative platform to align the work of United Nations organizations in delivering climate services, in order to develop management support in the areas of disaster risk reduction, resilience, water, food, health and energy, and collaboration on databases to provide country-level estimates of greenhouse gas emissions and support Member States on transparency in the context of the Paris Agreement. Joint global data and research programmes for understanding the impacts of climate change on issues such as humanitarian response and migration patterns are further areas of work already under way that can contribute to progress in this impact area.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Collaborate through existing mechanisms to create reliable and long-term baseline data sets for access by Member States;**
- **Provide data and observations for use in early warning related to crisis, disasters and humanitarian situations, including inputs to the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre;**
- **Strengthen the institutional capacity of Member States to generate, collect and use disaggregated data and information that enhances their ability to implement, monitor and report climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions and loss and damage;**
- **Provide coherent and, where possible, integrated support for national data collection and statistical capacity development efforts on climate change.**

Contributing agencies: WMO (facilitator), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, FAO, IOM, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA.

Climate finance and investment

Transitioning economies to climate-compatible pathways requires a major rechannelling of financial flows, both public and private. The scale of the challenge is approximately $1.5 trillion per annum, compared with business-as-usual. It requires policy action that: (a) builds, within sectors of the real economy, the demand for risk-informed, sustainable finance; (b) fosters financial sector development that enables the financial system to provide the required supply of sustainable finance; and (c) maximizes the allocation of public finance towards climate action, while ensuring that it is used as catalytically as possible.

The United Nations system can play a stronger role in helping countries to understand the complex and intertwined challenges in those three areas. It can provide guidance and capacity to countries and can facilitate an effective exchange of knowledge between them and support in accessing finance for climate action. This includes partnering: (a) with relevant public financial vehicles such as the Green Climate Fund,[5] the Global Environment Facility[6] and development banks; and (b) with networks of public and private financial institutions and financial regulators on financial regulations for sustainable development.

The objectives of collaborative United Nations system action on climate finance and investment are to foster understanding in the international community of climate finance as a systemic challenge involving financial markets; build the capacity of States to respond to that systemic challenge by implementing appropriate policy packages; and facilitate access by States to international finance and its effective use.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

Through partnerships, including that between the Convention on Climate Change and UNEP, which led to a joint work programme, address the following activities and deliverables:

- **A unified United Nations view on mobilizing financial stakeholders to action through systemic change;**
- **Support for countries in developing comprehensive, national climate financial road maps;**
- **Mobilization and facilitation of non-State action on climate finance and the building of synergies between United Nations action and intergovernmental processes on climate finance in the Group of 20;**
- **Support for countries at the national level to access financing, both direct and indirect, and integration of climate action across relevant national financial planning and budgeting processes.**

* *Contributing agencies: UNEP and the Convention on Climate Change (facilitators), ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, FAO, UNDP and UNIDO.*

[5] See www.greenclimate.fund.

[6] See www.thegef.org.

Nexus of climate change, sustainable development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian issues

Climate change is a "threat multiplier" that amplifies risks to economic, social and environmental issues and can aggravate already fragile situations and the existing vulnerability of populations. Through a better understanding of the linkages between climate change and peace and security, the United Nations system can improve the ability of Member States to achieve sustainable development and sustaining peace. Given the multifaceted nature of this issue, the expertise and experiences of the whole United Nations system is required. The United Nations system is in the unique position to support in-country and regional initiatives, raise awareness, underscore the urgency of understanding the nexus, generate data and multidisciplinary analyses, identify innovative and practical solutions and establish partnerships.

The United Nations system has an emerging foundation upon which to build momentum for action. Work is under way on migration, forced displacement, environment and climate change, issues of loss and damage are being explored by multiple agencies and United Nations collaboration is taking place in inter-agency forums and through diverse workplans, including on disaster displacement, climate change, displacement and conflict, and extended research on climate vulnerability and environmental cooperation for peacebuilding. Progress in this impact area will include external partnerships between the United Nations system and local authorities, civil society, academia and the private sector.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Existing mechanisms, including the United Nations Working Group on Transitions, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task team on strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus with a focus on protracted contexts and the Platform on Disaster Displacement, should discuss issues pertaining to the current climate nexus, so as to enhance cooperation, avoid duplication and address gaps;**
- **The United Nations system should work collectively towards a common framing of prevention and resilience and set out a collective research agenda to better understand the scope, interaction among drivers and tools for building and sustaining peace in a changing climate;**
- **United Nations entities should to come together to integrate climate change risk in collaborative frameworks and interventions on the issue. This should be informed by data gathering and analyses and promote the scaling up of action through humanitarian, peacebuilding and development programming.**

Contributing agencies: UNDP (facilitator), FAO, Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, IOM, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Education, advocacy and collaborative action

The critical role of education and training in climate change was highlighted in the Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising issued at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties held in 2014 and given the stamp of approval at the Paris Conference, held in 2015. Priorities and country needs are laid out in decisions on the Doha work programme, including the decision on the review of the Doha work programme adopted at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2016.

Work will be undertaken and strengthened through existing United Nations collaboration[7] and partnerships, including efforts to promote formal, non-formal and informal climate change education, and will provide a framework for coordinated support for the implementation of the Convention on Climate Change in relation to education, training, public awareness, participation and access to information. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can also be strengthened to achieve improved support for Member States, including existing United Nations collaboration that supports countries in designing and implementing country-driven, results-oriented and sustainable learning to address climate change.

The recommendations for this impact area are:

- **Jointly support the design and implementation of climate change education, training and awareness-raising at the national level through existing focal points, focusing on the challenges and needs outlined in the review of the Doha work programme of the Convention on Climate Change;**
- **Jointly promote awareness-raising, training and education as a key vector for achieving engagement in climate change mitigation and adaptation at regional and international high-level events such as the Conference of the Parties, with identified milestones;**
- **Jointly support countries in strengthening their capacity and putting in place the skills to implement their climate action plans under the Paris Agreement, including through support for national climate change education plans.**

Contributing agencies: UNESCO (facilitator), FAO, IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and WMO.

[7] This includes the United Nations Alliance on Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness Raising.

IV. Next steps and implementation

9. The United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action seeks to galvanize actions that maximize collaboration within the United Nations system on climate change, based on existing work under way, where joint approaches can tackle new challenges and where United Nations system collaboration can enhance support to Member States in implementing intergovernmental agreements.

10. Implementation of the strategic approach and its impact areas will be carried out predominantly through existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms and joint initiatives.[8] Annual reviews of progress in each impact area will be carried out through a lead-agency approach. This could be done through the existing core task team, under the continued facilitation of UNDP, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs,[9] as well as with the involvement of senior leadership and the expertise of other key United Nations agencies, where relevant. The High-level Committee on Programmes is further invited to review, as needed, the implementation of the strategic approach in order to address, at the global policy level, any systemic issues, gaps or bottlenecks that might be identified through periodic implementation reviews.

11. **The following recommendations are also identified to support the implementation of the strategic approach and its impact areas:**

- **United Nations agencies should use the Common Core Principles and the United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action as tools for catalysing and enabling collaboration among United Nations system entities on climate change action and for use by individual agencies in strategic planning, as appropriate;**
- **United Nations Development Group should address how the operationalization of the Common Core Principles and the United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action can best support country-level climate action by the United Nations within the context of Sustainable Development Goal implementation;**[10]
- **Development of an overview of existing joint United Nations approaches and initiatives on climate change that can be utilized and built upon for the implementation of the recommendations under the impact areas;**
- **Production of an external-facing version of the United Nations System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action in infographic form that illustrates joint United Nations climate action and advocates for the role of the United Nations in supporting increased climate ambition.**

[8] This includes regional United Nations Development Group coordination, regional coordination mechanisms, the Environment Management Group, the senior-level leadership group on disaster risk reduction and resilience convened by the Senior Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and collaboration with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, including its Sustainable Development Unit and its work streams on both climate change and Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

[9] Future leadership modalities could also be determined by the task team, once operational, including a rotating chair system and/or senior leadership by specific United Nations agencies, on the basis of "thematic" issues.

[10] Collaboration with the Development Operations Coordination Office is under way to determine how to facilitate this through the United Nations Development Group.

Annex*

Common Core Principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate action

Executive summary

1. Following the decision by HLCP at its 30th session, by which the Committee supported the development of a system-wide approach to coordinated climate action in a phased manner, a Task Team under the HLCP Working Group on Climate Change was established to develop "a proposal for the first part of the strategy, focused on system-wide policy and high-level programmatic coherence and coordination". Based on consultation across the system, it was agreed to generate a set of "key principles" to guide and inform the UN system-wide approach to climate action in the post-2015 period.

2. The principles draw on successful examples of previous and current UN system-wide approaches to climate change, as well as identified gaps and opportunities for system-wide action for more effective support to Member States. The principles have been designed to guide a system-wide approach and inform and strengthen the system's collective support to climate change action under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNFCCC process, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement at the global, regional and national and subnational level.

Common Core Principles for a UN System-Wide Approach to Climate Change Action

A. Support and advance inclusive sustainable development for all in line with common UN norms and standards

B. Facilitate integrated climate action that maximizes synergies and co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

C. Advance and scale-up ambitious and transformative action on climate change

D. Prioritize inter-agency collaboration and joint action for greater collective impact

E. Strengthen UN system responsiveness to Member States' needs on climate change

F. Base UN system climate action on the best climate science, data and knowledge

G. Build and strengthen partnerships, including with non-state actors

H. Ensure UN system-wide accountability on climate action

* The present annex is being issued without formal editing.

Common Core Principles for a UN System-Wide Approach to Climate Change Action

A. **Support and advance inclusive sustainable development for all in line with common UN norms and standards:** A UN system-wide approach to climate change action should be underpinned by the existing norms and standards in which UN system support to Member States is rooted, in alignment with and supportive of the ambition, vision and key guiding approaches laid out in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes (but is not limited to): pursuing inclusive sustainable development; ensuring climate change support for all, including children, youth, women, indigenous peoples and the poorest and most marginalized; integrating human rights, gender- and age-responsive approaches; and advancing women's empowerment, social justice and equality and a just transition for all.

B. **Facilitate integrated climate action that maximizes synergies and co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** A UN system-wide approach to climate change action should support Member States in advancing the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Samoa Pathway, and eventually the agendas expected to emerge, in 2016, from the World Humanitarian Summit and Habitat III, under the overall umbrella of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This should also include links to relevant climate actions under conventions such as the Montreal Protocol, the Rio Conventions and key issues relevant to climate action including energy, food security, water, gender equality, health and air pollution. Specifically, a system-wide approach must foster and capitalize on synergies, opportunities for alignment and co-benefits within and across these frameworks, as well as with other common UN strategies and implementation plans that interface with climate change. The approach should ensure that UN system action on climate change is not solely about protecting development from climate change or reducing greenhouse gas emissions as an end in itself, but also about promoting climate change action that can drive sustainable development.

C. **Advance and scale-up ambitious and transformative action on climate change:** The UN system should send a strong signal in support of efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Such a signal should include outlining pathways to a zero carbon and low emission world; supporting countries in implementing their national climate plans, including by promoting durable, sustainable and inclusive solutions for adaptation; and fostering dialogue and action for greater ambition for climate action in partnership with Member States and non-state actors. UN system-wide policy and high level programmatic coherence and coordination should support the main pillars of climate action: mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, transparency and monitoring, capacity development, facilitating technology transfer and finance.

D. **Prioritize interagency collaboration and joint action for greater collective impact:** A system-wide approach should identify and support action areas where Member States and the UN system can benefit from joint UN system approaches. A system-wide approach should not be intended to encompass all individual activities by agencies relating to their individual mandates or decisions of their governing bodies, nor limit these activities, but instead be focused specifically on areas where joint action leads to improved results. In this way, a system-wide approach seeks to limit duplication and repetition within the system, responding also to recent JIU recommendations for improved

collaboration, and encourage strengthened engagement among organizations to develop, assess and evolve approaches to climate action, based on comparative advantages of respective agencies and building on existing mechanisms and good practices.

E. **Strengthen UN system responsiveness to Member States' needs on climate change:** Noting the universality of both the SDGs and Paris Agreement, a system-wide approach should acknowledge that UN system support to Member States on climate change will differ in accordance with national and regional contexts and country needs. This includes recognizing the differing role of UN system support to middle- and high-income countries, least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing States (SIDS) and fragile states, as well as the need for locally specific climate change knowledge and data. A system-wide approach should facilitate joint UN system action to develop tools and approaches that help Member States to take climate action at global, regional, national and subnational level and be better equipped to implement the Paris Agreement, including through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which will play an important role in spurring climate change action at the national level.

F. **Base UN system climate action on the best climate science, data and knowledge:** The UN system should champion and base its support to Member States on the state-of-the-art in climate-relevant science, data and knowledge-including the knowledge and experiences of populations affected by climate change, and ensuring this data is gender sensitive. Furthermore, the UN should continue and strengthen its support for the global, regional national and subnational production, dissemination and use of this data, science and knowledge.

G. **Build and strengthen partnerships, including with non-state actors:** A system-wide approach should recognize and respond to the growing role of new partners (including the private sector, subnational actors and civil society) in supporting and strengthening UN action on climate change. This would include how the UN system complements and works with climate action, including on financing, under way outside the UN system and mobilizes partners in support of ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda. At the same time the UN system should ensure that UN action is inclusive to all stakeholders, while facilitating action that recognizes the distinct roles and responsibilities between different stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector. The UN system can also play an important role in providing normative guidance to the private sector on climate action and support efforts on accountability. This principle should notably build on the work undertaken by the Lima Paris Action Agenda partners in catalyzing multi-stakeholder partnerships for climate action.

H. **Ensure UN system-wide accountability on climate action**: A system-wide approach should encourage UN system support and programming that contributes to ambitious emissions reductions and reduces climate risk, and holds the UN system accountable to deliver on this to the member states and populations it will support. This includes ambitious approaches by the UN system at all levels and development and implementation of systematic tools and measures to strengthen accountability by the UN system for its own emissions, sharing climate data on current and future risks, advancing risk informed development, assessing the impact of project outcomes on vulnerability, and assessing the climate impact of implemented UN system programmes. This should encompass approaches for assessing programming that ensures climate-proofing and climate resilience, as called for in the Paris outcome.